BATMAN®

Batman: A Lonely Place of Dying · Part 1 of 6

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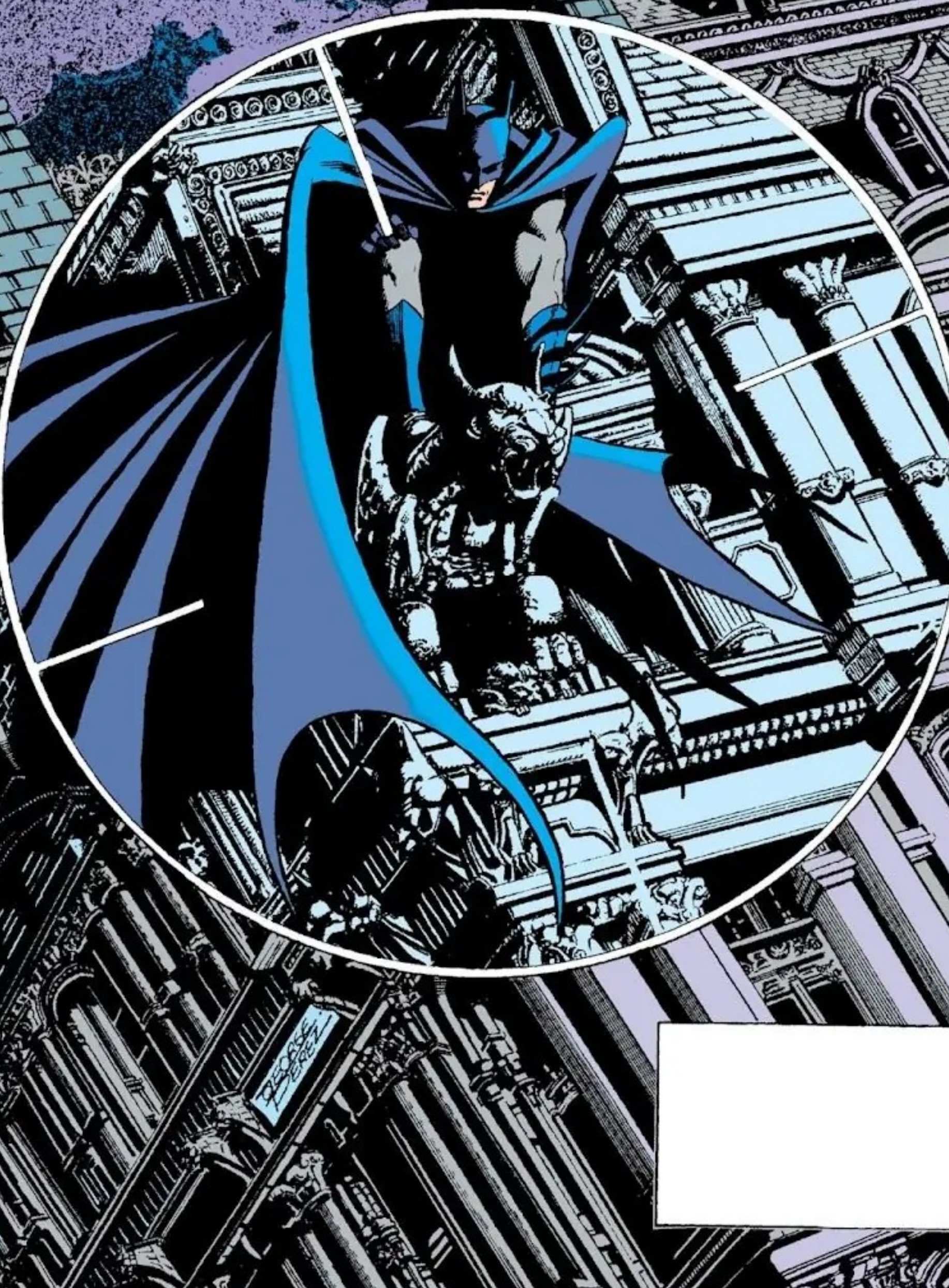

A LONELY PLACE OF DYING

CHAPTER ONE: SUSPECTS

HE FEELS IT NUMBING HIS LEG-- THE WATER RUSHING LIKE ICY SHARDS JUST INCHES BELOW. HIS THIGH WOUND THROBS, SCARLET SMEARING GREY-BLACK.

A PHLEGMY PIT LODGES IN HIS THROAT AS CALLUSED FISTS HAMMER UP INTO SOLAR PLEXUS.

IF HE WERE ANYONE ELSE, HE'D GIVE IN TO HIS WOUNDS WITH A FINAL GASP OF BLOOD-SPATTERED AIR.

BUT HE IS **THE BATMAN.**

AND THIS JUST MAKES HIM DETERMINED.

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DENNIS O'NEIL ° created by BOB KANE
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SNAP

HE WAS LED HERE BY A SERIES OF ALL-TOO-OBVIOUS CLUES. SOMEONE DESPERATELY WANTED HIM TO FIND THE RAVAGER.

WHIRRR

THE RAVAGER. IN THE PAST TWO WEEKS HE HAD KILLED AS MANY POLICEMEN.

HE HAD FOLLOWED THEM TO THEIR HOMES AND FOR NO APPARENT REASON SHOT THEM WHILE THEY SLEPT.

TWO WEEKS PRIOR HE GUNNED DOWN "DANNY AND DAWN", THE FAMOUS BROTHER-SISTER ROCK ACT IN FRONT OF 50,000 FANS.

SNAP

THERE WAS NO CONNECTION. NO SEEMING REASON FOR THE KILLINGS. AND THE POLICE HAD NO CLUES-- OR LEADS.

WHIRRR

THE TABLOIDS HAD A FIELD DAY WITH COMMISSIONER GORDON AND HIS MEN.

THEN, THIS MORNING, THERE WAS AN ANONYMOUS PHONE CALL TO GORDON.

SNAP WHIRRR

FROM THAT, LEADS UNFOLDED LIKE A BLOSSOMING FLOWER. LEADS WHICH BROUGHT HIM HERE.

HIS BREATH COMES IN SHORT SPUTTERING GASPS AS HIS MOUTH FILLS WITH WARM BLOOD...

THE BATMAN FALLS BACK TO THE WALL, TAKING STOCK OF HIS WOUNDS. HIS BREATHING EASES... HIS TAUT SKIN LOOSENS, THE NARROW WHITE SLIT OF HIS EYES WIDENS, IF ONLY A FRACTION.

HE WATCHES HIS FOE STRUGGLING IN THE WHITE FOAM.

FOR THE MOMENT, IT IS OVER.

THEY WILL MEET AGAIN.

SNAP WHIRR

SNAP WHIRRR

SNAP WHIRRR

SNAP WHIRRR

SNAP WHIRRR

SNAP WHIRRR

HE WAS *HURT*, BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP HIM.

WHIRRR

NOTHING STOPS HIM.

SO MUCH FOR BRUCE WAYNE.

NOW I CAN START ON *DICK GRAYSON*.

...NEWS HEADLINES ON WGCN, GOTHAM'S ONLY 24-HOUR ALL-NEWS STATION.

GOTHAM'S OLDEST ORPHANAGE RECEIVES MILLION-DOLLAR DONATION FROM WEALTHY PHILANTHROPIST, ALLOWING THE INSTITUTION TO REMAIN OPEN INDEFINITELY...

...AND GOTHAM'S OWN SPELLING CHAMP, NINE-YEAR OLD MOON KAPLAN, RETURNS FROM HER MEETING WITH GEORGE BUSH.

ASKED WHAT SHE THOUGHT OF THE PRESIDENT, THE ADOLESCENT ABECEDARIAN SAID "READ MY LIPS," AND SPELLED SOMETHING NOT SUITABLE FOR FAMILY LISTENING--

DIFFICULT

SQAKK SQEEECHHH... HELLO, HELLO? SORRY TO INTERRUPT, BUT I'M BACK... JUST FOR YOU!

...I'VE... BEEN... WAITING.

WHO ARE YOU?

WHO AM I? BETTER ASK WHO WE ARE. C'MON, PAL--I'M YOU, YOU'RE ME.

YOU KNOW YOU'VE BEEN GOING CRAZY FOR YEARS.

TA TA. GUESS WHAT?

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU'VE SUCCEEDED! YOU'RE OFFICIALLY CRACKED. SCHIZOID! DAFFY AS A DUCK!

LOOK IN THE MIRROR, PAL. YOU'RE NOT TALKING, BUT YOUR LIPS ARE MOVING.

IF THAT AIN'T PROOF THAT YOU'RE SEVERAL CHAPTERS SHY A BOOK, NOTHING IS.

SO WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO TODAY, PAL? CLIMB A WATER TOWER AND TAKE POT-SHOTS AT PEDESTRIANS?

NAH, DID THAT ALREADY.

WE'RE WAITING. WHAT DO WE WANT TO DO?

C'MON, YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO.

I DON'T *WANT* TO ANY MORE.

SURE YOU DO. YOU JUST DON'T KNOW IT.

FOR US-- JUST SAY IT. C'MON. PWETTY PLEASE.

BUT I SENT RAVAGER TO DO IT AND HE FAILED.

SAY IT, PAL. SAY IT.

OKAY. OKAY. WE KILL BATMAN.

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU GOT THE RIGHT ANSWER. DON PARDO, TELL THE MAN WHAT HE'S WON!

WON? WHY FRIEND, YOU'VE WON BATMAN'S ITINERARY FOR ONE FULL WEEK.

YOU'LL KNOW WHERE TO KILL HIM WHILE HE'S BUSTING UP SOME DRUG RUNNERS.

SMITHSON CONSTRUCTION

OR MAYBE YOU'LL JUST BLOW HIM TO BITE-SIZED BAT-BITS WHEN HE'S CLOSING IN ON SOME HAPLESS MURDERER WHICH WE'VE SET UP FOR YOUR VIEWING PLEASURE.

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"YOU'LL BE GIVEN A *THOUSAND* CHANCES TO SEE YOUR *DREAM* KILL COME TRUE.

"AND IT'S ALL YOURS. CONGRATULATIONS. IT COULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED TO A BETTER PSYCHO IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF.

"AND NOW BACK TO OUR *REGULARLY SCHEDULED REPORT:*

"... MEETING THE PRESIDENT WAS A *DREAM* COME TRUE."

2:24

HE LOOKS SO TIRED. HE HAS SINCE JASON PASSED AWAY.

4:47

5:18

BRUCE HASN'T BEEN THE SAME SINCE HE DIED. THE NEWSPAPERS DON'T KNOW ABOUT ROBIN'S DEATH...

...BUT EVEN THEY'VE HAD STORIES ABOUT BATMAN ACTING...WELL, ACTING DIFFERENTLY.

HE SEEMED HAPPIER WITH DICK.

POLICE

GOTHAM

BATMAN ATTACKS MOB

BATMAN ON THE RAMPAGE

BATMAN COLLARS DOPE RING

FIVE ARRES IN ONE NIG

NOW, I GUESS IT'S LIKE HE JUST DOESN'T CARE.

BUT I WANT HIM TO CARE AGAIN. I WANT HIM TO BE THE BATMAN I REMEMBER.

BATMAN BATTERS BANDITS

AND I DO REMEMBER HIM...

...AND I REMEMBER DICK...

..."I REMEMBER IT ALL."

ML

YOU LOOK *STRONGER* TODAY.

THE *FEVER'S* PASSED. THANKS TO YOU.

SOMETIMES I WONDER WHAT I'D DO WITHOUT YOU.

AT TIMES...

...SO DO I.

SIR--

--PERHAPS THIS *ISN'T* MY PLACE, BUT...

...BUT I *CARE* FOR YOUR WELL-BEING.

WHEN I FIRST ENTERED YOUR EMPLOY, I WAS IMPRESSED BY YOUR EXTRAORDINARY *PLANNING* AND *DEDUCTIVE* SKILLS.

YOU SPENT AS MUCH TIME *ORCHESTRATING* YOUR ACTIONS AS EXECUTING THEM.

CONVERSELY, SINCE MASTER JASON'S DEATH, YOUR ATTENTION TO DETAIL HAS BEEN... *UNIM-PRESSIVE* TO SAY THE LEAST.

ASIDE FROM MUSCLE STRAIN AND AN OCCASIONAL PULLED LIGAMENT, YOUR NEED FOR *MEDICAL ATTENTION* WAS MINIMAL.

AND IT IS HARDLY COINCIDENTAL THAT YOU HAVE REQUIRED ALMOST CONSTANT DOCTORING.

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IN THE PAST *TWO* WEEKS, YOU HAVE BEEN SHOT TWICE. STABBED TWICE. YOU HAVE BEEN BLOODIED AND BLUDGEONED BY FOES YOU ONCE WOULD HAVE DANCED AROUND WITHOUT THINKING.

I DISTINCTLY REMEMBER WHEN YOU FIRST INSTRUCTED MASTER DICK IN COMBAT, YOU SAID, "*WE'RE NOT BRUTALIZERS. WE'VE GOT TO THINK WITH OUR HEADS, NOT WITH OUR FISTS.*"

SINCE MASTER JASON'S DEATH, YOU'VE CHANGED.

IT SEEMS, SIR, THAT YOU NOW DO *ALL* YOUR THINKING WITH THOSE SADLY BRUISED AND BATTERED KNUCKLES.

YESTERDAY YOU COLLAPSED FROM YOUR WOUNDS. I CANNOT BE CERTAIN THAT *NEXT* TIME YOU WILL SURVIVE THEM.

SIR, AS *LOATH* AS YOU MIGHT BE TO HEAR THIS, I DO *NOT* INTEND TO SPEND THE REST OF *MY* LIFE PLAYING NURSE.

SIR--?

FIFTY THREE YEARS AGO, WHEN HE CAME TO AMERICA FROM SICILY, HE WAS MERELY THREE-YEAR-OLD GIUSEPPE SCALATTO.

WHEN HE WAS NINE, HE "AMERICANIZED" HIS NAME TO GERRY SKYE.

OVER THE FOLLOWING FORTY YEARS GERRY ACCUMULATED A FORTUNE BY JOINING THE FAMILY BUSINESS.

THAT'S THE FAMILY. NOT HIS FAMILY.

PSSST. SKYE.

WHATEVER IT IS--LATER.

NOW. "PAYROLL ACTIVATION."

OKAY, OKAY-- NOW.

GERRY, WHAT'S WRONG?

NOTHING. DON'T WORRY. ENJOY.

THIS HAD *BETTER* BE GOOD.

YOU HAVE A *COUPLE* OF BOYS THAT HAVE BEEN CAUSING YOU TROUBLE.

YEAH. PICO AND ROBERTSON. HOW'D YOU KNOW?

I JUST DO. WE CAN TAKE THEM OUT AND *BATMAN* AT THE SAME TIME. *TWO* FOR THE PRICE OF ONE.

TOMORROW. THE ZWEI BROTHERS WAREHOUSE. TWO *A.M.*

NOW GO BACK TO YOUR NICE WIFE.

THE *FAT LADY'S* ABOUT TO SING.

AHAHAH HAHAH

I DID IT -- I SET UP THE HEIST. BATMAN'S GOING TO *GET* IT.

AREN'T YOU PLEASED?

WHERE *ARE* YOU? I SAID, "AREN'T YOU PLEASED WITH WHAT I DID?"

KLIK

YOU THERE NOW?

...SALE FOR TWELVE HOURS ONLY. FORTY PERCENT OFF ALL MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CLOTHING...

NOW, I DON'T MIND FORTY PERCENT OFF WOMEN'S CLOTHES--

--BUT MEN, KEEP YOUR PANTS ON!

SQUAKKK SQREEE LET'S NOT CONGRATULATE OURSELVES YET, PAL. WE'VE STILL GOT WORK TO DO AND BATS TO KILL...

I KNOW... I KNOW, EVEN IF I DON'T WANT--

...SO GET GOING...

...DOWN TO ART STAMPLER CLOTHIERS, 246 EIGHTH STREET, TAKE THE ELEVATOR TO THE SECOND FLOOR.

WHAT? WHERE ARE YOU? DON'T GO. DON'T LEAVE ME *ALONE*. BY MYSELF. JUST ME. *ONE*.

OKAY, ALL RIGHT -- CALM DOWN. THERE'S NO ONE HERE... NO ONE'S *BEEN* HERE.

I'M TALKING TO *MYSELF*. BUT THAT DOESN'T *CHANGE* THINGS.

BATMAN STILL HAS TO DIE. TOMORROW... THE TWENTY-SECOND.. HE DIES...

TOMORROW!

TOMORROW.

THERE. *TITANS TOWER*. IT'S JUST A MATTER OF *TIME* NOW. THEY'RE INSIDE. HE'LL HAVE TO LEAVE SOMETIME.

AHH, TROIA AND CHANGELING. GOOD--THEIR MEETING'S OVER.

STRANGE--STARFIRE'S LEAVING ALONE. BUT DICK GRAYSON *LIVES* WITH HER.

AND HE USUALLY *LEAVES* WITH HER.

CYBORG AND JERICHO...? HE'S NOT WITH *THEM*, EITHER?

SOMETHING'S DEFINITELY WRONG.

TWENTY MINUTES. HE *CAN'T* STILL BE INSIDE.

BUT IF HE'S NOT, WHERE *IS* HE?

I'VE *GOT* TO FIND HIM.

HE LIVES HERE, BUT I CAN'T *WAIT* FOR HIM FOREVER.

GOT TO GET BACK TO MY *HOTEL* BY SIX.

I KNOW WHAT TO DO.

SHE'S ONLY CARRYING ONE DINNER.

HE'S *NOT* THERE.

BUT I'VE *GOT* TO FIND OUT WHERE HE'S GONE!

I'VE *GOT* TO TAKE THE *RISK*.

I'VE *GOT* TO SPEAK TO HER.

NOW!

THE WORD HIT THE STREET LAST NIGHT. SOMETHING GOING DOWN AT ZWEI BROTHERS. SO HE'S BEEN SITTING HERE SINCE ELEVEN, WAITING, THINKING, TIME SLOWLY PASSING BELOW HIM.

EACH MINUTE VIBRATES, SHOCKING HIM OUT OF HIS REVERIE, REMIND-ING HIM OF HIS SOLITUDE.

ZWEI BROTHERS IMPORTERS

TICK...TICK...TICK...TICK...

GEARS JERK INTO PLACE, PAUSE, THEN CRANK ON IN AN ENDLESS CIRCLE.

HE SITS AND WAITS.

TICK...TICK...TICK...TI--

YOU SURE THIS IS THE *PLACE*, MAN?

YEAH, ZWEI BROTHERS. THIS'S GOTTA BEIT.

22 SECOND STREET

DON'T LIKE IT HERE, MAN. DON'T LIKE COMIN' HERE DURIN' THE DAY, LET 'LONE *NOW*!

WE'RE NOT BEIN' *PAID* TO LIKE IT, C'MON.

EXCELLENT. THEY'RE *ALL* IN PLACE.

BOOKS? MAN, I DON'T GET IT. WE'RE STEALIN' *BOOKS*?

THE BOSS SAID WE WERE BEIN' *PAID* TO BY THE PUBLISHERS. THEY GET THE *INSURANCE* AN' THEN SELL 'EM AT A *DISCOUNT* ON STREET CORNERS...

THEY GET THEIR MONEY *TWICE*-- AND THE WRITERS GET *ZIP*!

BUT *BOOKS*? MAN, LIKE WHO *READS* ANYMORE?

YOU SHOULD.

WHO SAID--

BATMAN!?!

THE BOSS SAID HE'D SHOW. JUST LIKE HE DID FOR THE RAVAGER!

BUT WE'RE READY!

BAM BA

BAM

BAM

BAM

BAM

BAM

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BAM BAM BAM BA

WHAT TH--

YOU'RE DEAD MEAT, BATMAN! DEAD MEAT!

BAM BAM B

"THINK...WITH... OUR... HEADS..."

"THINK!!"

ALFRED'S VOICE KEEPS RUNNING THROUGH HIS MIND: "WE'RE NOT BRUTALIZERS. WE'VE GOT TO THINK WITH OUR HEADS, NOT WITH OUR FISTS."

SOMETHING IS WRONG... SOMETHING--

SPLANG

THE PUNK MENTIONED THE RAVAGER. THERE'S A CONNECTION WITH THE RAVAGER?

"THINK WITH OUR HEADS, NOT WITH OUR FISTS."

ISOLATED, SEEMINGLY UNCONNECTED FRAGMENTS FALL INTO PLACE.

BAM BAM

BAM BAM BAM BA

TWO WEEKS AGO--TWO POLICEMEN KILLED. TWO WEEKS BEFORE THAT, BROTHER AND SISTER SHOT. TWO MORE VICTIMS.

TODAY--THE TWENTY-SECOND. TWO A.M. THIS ADDRESS: 22 SECOND STREET.

BAM BAM BAM BAM BA

IT'S ALL BEEN THERE ALL ALONG.

ZWEI BROTHERS WAREHOUSE... ZWEI IS GERMAN FOR TWO.

"THINK WITH YOUR HEAD!!"

BAM BAM

HE CURSES HIMSELF-- WHAT WERE YOU DOING?

WHAT WERE YOU THINKING WITH?

AND BATMAN KNOWS THE SAD, LUDICROUS ANSWER. HE WASN'T THINKING.

HE WAS ACTING AND REACTING.

FOR GORDON
KEEP UNDER WRAPS
BM

OTHERWISE HE WOULD HAVE REALIZED LONG AGO--

--THAT TWO-FACE WAS BACK!

DRY WALL

HE SURVIVED, BUT THAT'S OKAY. EVERY CLOUD HAS A SILVER LINING.

THERE'S ALWAYS TOMORROW.

IF AT FIRST YOU DON'T SUCCEED...

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL. THAT'S WHAT I ALWAYS SAY.

YOU DO KNOW I'VE GOT A DOOR.

TWO-FACE.

YOU MEAN THE MAN YOU BROKE OUT OF JAIL--

--AND THEN LET ESCAPE FROM A CARIBBEAN ISLAND?

THAT TWO FACE? WHAT ABOUT HIM?

ANY WORD?

WE'VE ISSUED AN A.P.B. FOR THE TRI-STATE AREA AND NOTIFIED THE FBI.

I'VE CANCELED LEAVES, PUT EXTRA MEN ON DUTY AND DOUBLED SHIFTS.

NOT THAT I EXPECT IT WILL DO ANY--

JUST ONCE I WISH HE'D SAY GOOD-BYE.

I HATE TALKING TO MYSELF.

DING

DONG

HOLD ON. I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.

YES--?

KORY ANDERS? STARFIRE? YOU'RE ONE OF THE TITANS.

I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU SOMETHING.

I'M SORRY, BUT I REALLY CAN'T--

I'M LOOKING FOR DI--*NIGHTWING*. I'VE *GOT* TO FIND HIM.

IT'S *URGENT*.

NIGHTWING? WHY DO YOU--

IS HE HERE? DO YOU KNOW WHERE HE IS?

I KNOW HE WASN'T AT YOUR *MEETING* TODAY.

I'M SORRY, I CAN'T GIVE YOU THAT INFORMATION.

NIGHTWING *LEFT* THE TITANS SEVERAL *WEEKS* AGO.

BUT, IF YOU NEED *OUR* HELP--

NO--I NEED *HIM*. NOBODY ELSE.

WAIT! HOW DID YOU KNOW WHERE I LIVE?

WHO ARE YOU?

GRAYSON KEPT HIS *OLD* APARTMENT.

IF HE LEFT THE TITANS, HE MIGHT BE HERE.

OKAY, WHAT NOW?

HE'S A *DETECTIVE*... HE MUST KEEP NOTES. EVEN SOMETHING SCRIBBLED ON A SHOPPING LIST.

GRAYSON, WHERE *ARE* YOU?

HOLD ON JUST ONE MOMENT...

END OF AMERICANA IN SIGHT?

LOCAL CIRCUS TO CLOSE AFTER SIXTY YEARS

Haly Circus, which has entertained children of all ages for more than sixty years, will close this October after their final summer season. Faith Haly, granddaughter of circus founder Garrison Haly, said, "We simply can't compete with the larger corporate circuses. The days of the small family circus, sadly, are over."

NO! THE HALY CIRCUS IS *CLOSING?*

IT CAN'T BE!

IT *CAN'T!*

"BUT AT LEAST I NOW KNOW WHERE HE IS!"

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GEORGE PÉREZ

GEMINI CASINO

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IF I WANT TO *MURDER* BATMAN, I'VE GOT TO LURE HIM TO ME.

BUT HOW? WHAT CAN I STEAL? WHAT *CLUES* CAN I LEAVE THAT ARE BOTH OBVIOUS AND YET SUBTLE?

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, IT NEVER GETS ANY *EASIER.*

HARVEY IS OUT THERE SOMEWHERE. HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S PLANNING, KNOWS WHAT HE WANTS...

...WHILE I CAN ONLY *GUESS.*

IF I CAN'T FIND *HIM*, WHAT CAN I DO TO MAKE HIM FIND *ME?*

A LONELY PLACE OF DYING

CHAPTER THREE: PARALLEL LINES!

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BLOW UP THE *TWIN TOWERS*? POSSIBLE, BUT WHAT DO I GET OUT OF IT BESIDES BATMAN'S DEATH?

I DO SO LIKE KILLING *TWO* BIRDS WITH ONE STONE. SHOULD I DO IT?

SCRATCH THE TOWER.

BRUCE WAYNE COULD STAGE AN EVENT IN THE TWIN TOWERS FOR THE TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF GOTHAM CITY.

TWO POSSIBLE TARGETS-- THE CHARITY MONEY AND ME.

HE HAS A PSYCHOTIC NEED TO ACHIEVE *TWO* GOALS WITH EACH CRIME.

IT'S GETTING HARDER AND HARDER PLANNING THESE *TWO-SIDED* CRIMES. PERHAPS I SHOULD ALTER MY MODUS OPERANDI--

--JUST THIS *ONCE*?

THE MAN WHO WAS DISTRICT ATTORNEY IS AT CONSTANT ODDS WITH THE MAN WHO'S BECOME *TWO-FACE*.

BUT I KNOW HOW HE THINKS, AND THE IDEA IS TO *EXPLOIT* THAT.

NO... BATMAN WOULD *NEVER* BELIEVE IT.

WHAT THEN?

THERE'S THE *CHARITY* PERFORMANCE OF "*THE COMEDY OF ERRORS*" TO CONSIDER.

TWO SETS OF *TWIN* BROTHERS, AND THE PROCEEDS ARE GOING TO *TWO* DIFFERENT CHARITIES.

CLICHÉD. I'VE GOT TO BE *ORIGINAL* OR HE'LL BE SUSPICIOUS.

THE QUESTION IS *HOW*?

WHAT DO I DO?

THE GOTHAM SHAKESPEARE COMPANY IS STAGING BENEFIT PERFORMANCES ALL WEEK...

...AND THEY'VE SCHEDULED "*TWO GENTLEMEN FROM VERONA*" FOR TOMORROW.

NO... TOO OBVIOUS. HE'D EXPECT ME TO STAKE THAT OUT.

LET'S SEE-- TWO? TWINS? DUO? DUET? DO ANY OF THEM *SPARK* AN IDEA? WHICH WOULD *HE* RESPOND TO?

THE PROBLEM IS HE'S *BRILLIANT*. I NEED *INSPIRATION*-- SOMETHING DEADLY, SOMETHING *WORTHY*.

DEADLY AND WORTHY-- DEFINITELY A *DOUBLE*-THREAT.

2

DALI'S DOUBLE-HEADED PAINTING IS ON EXHIBIT. NO-- NOT ENOUGH PROFIT.

THE MUSEUM HAS A TWO-TINED, JEWEL-ENCRUSTED *DEMI-LUNE* BLADE WORTH THOUSANDS. I COULD STEAL IT AND KILL HIM WITH IT AT THE SAME TIME.

NO, I HAVEN'T STOLEN WEAPONS BEFORE. HE'D SUSPECT A TRAP.

PRINCESS DIANA'S DOUBLE-DIAMOND PENDANT? TWO RARE GUTENBERGS? C'MON, C'MON-- THINK, MAN-- *THINK*!

I NEED TO GET INTO HIS HEAD AND THINK AS HE DOES. *TWO* MINDS BUT WE'VE GOT TO BE *ONE*!

SO LET'S GO OVER THE *OBVIOUS*, IF ONLY TO DISCARD IT: WHAT COMES IN TWOS, DUOS, EVEN TWINS? WHAT COULD HE RESIST?

YOU WERE A *BRILLIANT* MAN, HARVEY. I CAN MATCH THAT, BUT I CAN'T *DUPLICATE* THE INSANE WAY YOUR MIND NOW WORKS.

INSANITY AND BRILLIANCE-- DEFINITELY A *DOUBLE*-THREAT.

THE GOTHAM GOLIATHS ARE PLAYING A *DOUBLE-HEADER* WITH THE MINNESOTA TWINS. NO, THE *GATE RECEIPTS* AREN'T ENOUGH TO INTEREST HIM.

WAYNE TECHNOLOGY'S UNVEILING A *BINARY FUSION SYSTEM* THAT COULD BE WORTH *MILLIONS*.

I DON'T THINK SO-- HE'S *RARELY* SHOWN AN INTEREST IN HI-TECH CRIMES.

TWO OF THE *DEAD SEA SCROLLS* ARE ON DISPLAY. *THINK*! WHAT COULD LURE HIM OUT OF HIDING?

GET INTO HIS HEAD. THINK LIKE *HE* DOES.

3

WHAT WOULD HE *EXPECT* ME TO DO?

DEFINITELY A *ROBBERY*. SOMETHING LARGE, BUT NOT OVERLY SO.

VIOLENT? ENOUGH TO CONVINCE HIM THAT ROBBERY IS MY MOTIVE, NOT MURDER.

WHAT CAN I DO TO LURE HIM TO ME?

DEFINITELY SOMETHINS HE CAN *STEAL*.

SECURITY? ENOUGH TO CONVINCE HIM THE LURE IS REAL, YET NOT ENOUGH TO FRIGHTEN HIM OFF.

NOT JEWELRY. NOT BANKS. NOT DRUGS.

A CRIME WHERE I CAN NET *MILLIONS*, AND YET--

--OH, YES... *YES!*

NOT THE JEWELRY MART. BANKS WON'T COOPERATE. NO DRUGS.

IT NEEDS TO BE A CRIME LARGE ENOUGH TO ENTICE HIM, AND YET--

-- OH, YES... *YES!*

OF COURSE.

BATMAN, *TOMORROW* WILL BE THE LAST OF YOUR LIFE.

OF COURSE.

TWO-FACE, YOUR CRIME-SPREE ENDS--*TOMORROW!*

ALFRED, THIS MAY BE A BIT AWKWARD, BUT I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET--

--WHAT DID YOU SAY YOUR *NAME* WAS?

TIM. MR. PENNYWORTH--GOSH, I WAS REALLY HOPING WE'D MEET.

I KNOW YOU'RE BATMAN'S CONFIDANT, AND I'VE *DREAMED* ABOUT THE STORIES YOU COULD TELL.

I AM--*WHAT* DID YOU SAY?

FORGET IT, ALFRED. DON'T ASK ME HOW, BUT HE *KNOWS*.

GOSH--YOU KNOW, I'VE SEEN PICTURES OF THIS PLACE, BUT IT'S EVEN BIGGER AND BETTER THAN I THOUGHT.

OH, MY--THERE'S THE RENOIR MR. WAYNE BOUGHT LAST YEAR. I READ ABOUT THAT IN *ART WORLD TODAY*.

HE'S GOT AN *ERTE*? OH, I LOVE HIS STUFF. MY DAD BOUGHT AN ERTE LITHO LAST YEAR...

...BUT THIS IS A *STATUE*. MR. PENNYWORTH, DICK, PLEASE, CAN I SEE THE *REST* OF THE HOUSE?

SIR, JUST WHO *IS* THIS LAD?

YOU KNOW ALMOST AS MUCH AS I DO, ALFRED.

HE FOUND ME AT THE HALY CIRCUS AND SAID BRUCE NEEDED ME HERE.

I COULDN'T LET A TWELVE YEAR OLD KID WANDER AROUND ALONE, SO I BROUGHT HIM WITH ME.

I'M *NOT* TWELVE--I'M THIRTEEN.

AND I DON'T WANT TO CAUSE TROUBLE.

DICK, PLEASE--I PROMISE, ONCE YOU HELP BATMAN, I'M *OUT* OF HERE.

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I DON'T KNOW WHAT GAME YOU'RE PLAYING, BUT WE ARE *NOT* ENJOYING IT.

IF YOU ARE HERE FOR A *PURPOSE*, STATE YOUR CASE.

IF NOT, GIVE ME YOUR *PHONE NUMBER* AND I SHALL CALL YOUR PARENTS. YOU *DO* HAVE PARENTS, DON'T YOU?

I DO, BUT THEY'RE OFF VISITING SOMEPLACE OR ANOTHER ON BUSINESS. DAD'S ALWAYS TRAVELING, AND MOM GOES WITH HIM.

AND YOU?

THEY PUT ME IN A *BOARDING* SCHOOL OUTSIDE GOTHAM CITY, BUT THIS IS A VACATION WEEK.

LOOK, I'M SORRY, BUT EVER SINCE JASON DIED, BATMAN'S BEEN ACTING *CRAZY*. HE NEEDS HELP...

...AND I THINK HE NEEDS *YOU!*

HOW DO YOU KNOW ABOUT JASON?

HOW DO YOU KNOW *ANY* OF THIS?

OKAY, YOU WON'T TAKE ME SERIOUSLY UNTIL I TELL YOU EVERYTHING.

DICK, I DON'T WANT THIS TO HURT YOU. AND I'M REALLY AFRAID IT MIGHT.

TIM, JUST TELL YOUR STORY, PLEASE.

ALL RIGHT, ALL RIGHT. WELL, FIRST, MY NAME'S *TIM DRAKE*...

...AND THOUGH YOU WON'T REMEMBER IT, WE'VE MET BEFORE.

I'VE EVEN GOT A *PHOTOGRAPH* TO PROVE IT.

THIS WAS TAKEN ON MY FIRST TRIP TO THE CIRCUS--ON THE DAY I SAW *BATMAN* FOR THE FIRST TIME...

...ON THE DAY *YOUR* PARENTS WERE KILLED.

OH, MY GOD--

MY PARENTS...

I-I *KNOW* THIS PHOTOGRAPH. THAT'S *YOU?*

UH-HUH. AFTER BRUCE WAYNE MADE YOU HIS WARD, MY PARENTS SENT IT TO YOU. THEY THOUGHT YOU'D WANT IT.

I WAS ONLY A KID, BUT I DON'T THINK I'LL *EVER* FORGET WHAT HAPPENED.

I HAD NIGHTMARES ABOUT IT FOR *YEARS.* FIRST ABOUT YOUR PARENTS, THEN ABOUT BATMAN.

I KEPT SEEING THIS DARK BLACK THING THAT SWOOPED OUT OF THE SKY. NO, NO--LET ME START AT THE *BEGINNING.*

I THINK YOU WERE RIGHT, HONEY--HE LOVES IT. LOOK AT HIM LAUGHING AT EVERYTHING.

HEY, I SAID HE WASN'T TOO YOUNG.

HAILY

OKAY, I WAS WRONG. BUT SOMETIMES CIRCUSES CAN *FRIGHTEN* KIDS.

THEY'RE *LOUD* AND ROWDY, AND I REMEMBER WHEN I WAS TIMOTHY'S AGE I WAS *SCARED* BY PEOPLE WEARING COSTUMES.

SUE ME. I'M A *MOTHER.* I WORRY.

YOU WERE A GIRL. TIM'S A *BOY.* THAT'S THE DIFFERENCE.

SEXISM, DEAR? AND HERE I THOUGHT YOU WERE *LIBERATED.*

OKAY, OKAY, I'M SORRY. LOOK, IF YOU'RE SO WORRIED, THERE'RE A COUPLE OF THE PERFORMERS.

LET'S TAKE HIM OVER THERE. HE'LL SEE THEY'RE *PEOPLE* JUST LIKE HIM.

...I'M ACTUALLY GOING TO THE *WORLD SERIES?*

UMM, EXCUSE US FOR INTERRUPTING, BUT THIS IS TIM'S FIRST TIME AT THE CIRCUS...

... AND WE WERE WONDERING IF YOU'D LET US TAKE YOUR PHOTO WITH HIM?

TIM, SAY CHEESE.

"MAYBE I KNEW YOU WERE JUST A KID LIKE ME, BUT I KEPT STARING AT YOU, AND YOUR CIRCUS COSTUME.

"IT WAS BRIGHT RED AND GREEN AND YOU SEEMED SO HAPPY IN IT."

WATCH ME ON THE TRAPEZE, TIM. I'M GOING TO DO MY ACT--'SPECIALLY FOR YOU.

BE GOOD NOW.

I DON'T REMEMBER THE CLOWNS OR THE ANIMALS, OR ANYTHING ELSE. I JUST REMEMBER WAITING FOR *YOU* TO GO ON.

AND THEN, WHEN YOU DID, I JUST SAT THERE AND WATCHED.

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I'VE *DONE* IT. I'VE SET UP THE TRAP. TELL ME I DID THE RIGHT THING.

TALK TO ME.

...TONIGHT'S NEWS HEADLINES--FAMED CHILD MOVIE TWINS ALAN AND RICHARD WRIGHT WERE REPORTEDLY KIDNAPPED THIS EVENING. POLICE ARE WITHHOLDING ALL INFORMATION.

THERE--YOU *HEAR* THAT? THAT'S *MY* STORY. *MY CRIME*. AND I LEFT ENOUGH CLUES FOR EVEN THE *POLICE* TO REALIZE I'M THE CULPRIT.

KIDS IN JEOPARDY! IF *THAT* DOESN'T DRAW OUT BATMAN, NOTHING CAN.

...AND CLUB GEMINI IS HOLDING THE WORLD SERIES OF POKER TONIGHT WITH A 22 MILLION DOLLAR TOP PRIZE!

THESE AND OTHER STORIES AFTER THIS BRIEF WORD...

CLUB *GEMINI*? *GEMINI*?!? TWENTY-*TWO* MILLION.

NO...NO, I'VE ALREADY SET *MY* CRIME IN MOTION.

I CAN'T CHANGE MY MIND... I--I-- CAN'T... I C-CAN'T.

BATMAN... SOMEONE'S KIDNAPPED THE WRIGHT TWINS. TWO-FACE DO YOU THINK?

COMMISSIONER, WE BOTH KNOW HARVEY STILL HAS *SOURCES* IN THE FORCE.

IF HE LEARNS I'M ON PARADISE BEACH, HE'LL REALIZE IT'S A *TRAP*. THIS IS BETWEEN *US*. NOBODY ELSE.

THE WRIGHT TWINS? OF COURSE THAT'S HIM, BUT I CAN'T FOLLOW IT UP NOW.

I'VE ALREADY LAID THE BAIT.

COMMISSIONER-- KEEP ME INFORMED.

THOSE KIDS. BLAST HIM!

BLAST HIM!!

"DICK, I REMEMBER YOU SWINGING DOWN TO THE GROUND AS YOUR PARENTS CLIMBED THE LADDER. YOUR MOTHER WENT FIRST. YOUR FATHER FOLLOWED. AND THEN IT HAPPENED. THEIR TRAPEZE ROPE SNAPPED, AND THEY FELL. I TURNED AWAY... I COULDN'T WATCH. THEN I HEARD YOU CRYING AND I TURNED BACK AND SAW YOU HOLDING ONTO THEM, AND I BEGAN CRYING, TOO."

I'M SORRY, DICK. I REALLY AM. I TOLD YOU I DIDN'T WANT TO *HURT* YOU BY TELLING YOU ALL THIS.

DICK...

IT'S ALL RIGHT, TIM.

NO MATTER HOW OLD YOU ARE, THERE ARE SOME THINGS YOU *NEVER* FORGET.

OR GET OVER.

BUT YOU HAVEN'T TOLD ME ANYTHING I DON'T ALREADY KNOW.

I WANT THE *REST* OF IT. *ALL* OF IT.

ALL RIGHT. I UNDERSTAND. THE NEXT THING I REMEMBER WAS THIS DARK *SHAPE* FLYING DOWN AT YOU. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WAS.

BUT I THOUGHT IT HAD HURT YOUR PARENTS AND NOW IT WAS GOING TO HURT YOU.

"I WANTED TO HELP... I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT I STILL WANTED TO DO SOMETHING.

"BUT WHEN HE TOUCHED YOU I REALIZED SOMETHING--HE WASN'T BAD. HE WASN'T TRYING TO HURT YOU.

"HE WAS THERE TO HELP.

"THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I SAW BATMAN. AND IN THAT MOMENT HE WENT FROM BEING A MONSTER--

"--TO BECOMING SOME GREAT DARK KNIGHT."

"MY PARENTS HELD ME BACK AS THE THING MOVED TO YOU. I CRIED OUT TO WARN YOU.

BRUCE WAYNE HAD TO *GUARANTEE* THE PRIZE MONEY, BUT IT WAS *WORTH* IT.

IF I KNOW HARVEY, HE WON'T BE ABLE TO RESIST.

NOW TO SIT HERE AND WAIT. HE'LL COME TO ME. HE'LL BE *HERE*.

THE WRIGHT TWINS.

I...CAN'T LEAVE. HE'LL BE HERE. CAPTURING HIM IS MY FIRST PRIORITY.

I SIMPLY *CAN'T* LEAVE.

GEMINI CASINO

TONIGHT THE WORLD SERIES OF POKER 22 MILLION IN PRIZE MONEY

I HAD TO CALL IN ALL MY *DEBTS* TO GET THIS BRIDGE CLOSED OFF TO TRAFFIC, BUT IT WAS *WORTH* IT.

IF I KNOW BATMAN, HE WON'T BE ABLE TO RESIST.

CLUB GEMINI?

BUT I CAN'T LEAVE NOW. HE'LL BE HERE, AND KILLING HIM IS MY FIRST PRIORITY.

I SIMPLY *CAN'T* LEAVE.

I CAN'T LEAVE.

HE'LL BE HERE. I *KNOW* HE WILL.

THOSE KIDS...

TWENTY-TWO MILLION. I *CAN'T* STAY.

GEMI

MY PARENTS SENT A COPY OF THE PICTURE THEY TOOK TO YOU AND THEN THEY FORGOT ALL ABOUT IT.

TROUBLE WAS, I DIDN'T FORGET. I NEVER TOLD THEM, BUT FOR YEARS I KEPT HAVING THE *SAME NIGHTMARE* OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

"FIRST, I'D WATCH YOU DO YOUR QUADRUPLE SOMERSAULT, THEN YOUR PARENTS WOULD FALL, AND FALL.

"...BUT THEY'D NEVER LAND."

THEN BATMAN APPEARED AND JUST AS I'D START CRYING, HE'D *SAVE* ME.

FIRST ALONE, THEN AFTER HE MET YOU, WITH *ROBIN*.

TIM, WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ANYTHING?

EVERYTHING, DICK. THAT IMAGE OF YOU DOING YOUR SOMERSAULT--

-- IT STAYED WITH ME FOR *YEARS*. I COULDN'T GET IT OUT OF MY *MIND*.

YOU SEE, IT ALL CAME TOGETHER WHEN I WAS ABOUT NINE. THE *NEWS* WAS ON AND I WAS SORT OF WATCHING IT.

...MUST WATCH THIS AMAZING VIDEO TAPE TAKEN OF BATMAN AND ROBIN BY HIDDEN SECURITY CAMERAS LATE LAST NIGHT.

"BATMAN AND ROBIN? I HAD TO LISTEN."

GOTHAM'S DYNAMIC DUO WERE SEARCHING FOR THE ARCH-CRIMINAL WHO CALLS HIMSELF THE PENGUIN.

THERE'S BATMAN IN THE DISTANCE, UNAWARE THE PENGUIN IS ABOUT TO OPEN FIRE WITH SOMETHING HE CALLS A BUMBER-SHOOTER.

ABOVE THE PENGUIN, BATMAN'S YOUNG PARTNER, ROBIN, IS ON THE CROSSBEAMS.

WE'VE INTERCUT THE TAPES FROM THE TWO CAMERAS TO GIVE YOU THE BEST VIEW. THERE!

I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND.

C'MON, DICK-- THAT FLIP YOU DID AS ROBIN. IT WAS A *QUADRUPLE* SOMERSAULT.

THE CIRCUS RINGMASTER SAID ONLY *THREE* PEOPLE COULD DO THAT.

I KNEW THAT SOMERSAULT. KNEW IT LIKE I KNEW MY OWN NAME.

AND IT ALL MADE SENSE. BATMAN SHOWED UP AT THE CIRCUS AND TOOK YOU WITH HIM.

ABOUT SIX MONTHS LATER, ROBIN MADE HIS FIRST APPEARANCE.

IF YOU WERE ROBIN, AND YOU WERE BRUCE WAYNE'S *WARD*--

-- I REALIZED BRUCE WAYNE WAS BATMAN.

I DON'T WANT TO SAY THE REST WAS EASY, BECAUSE YOU GUYS REALLY COVERED YOUR TRACKS.

BUT IF YOU GO IN *KNOWING* BRUCE WAYNE AND DICK GRAYSON ARE BATMAN AND ROBIN, WELL, YOU CAN FIND THE CLUES TO PROVE IT.

WHEN YOU MOVED TO NEW YORK TO BECOME NIGHTWING, THERE *WASN'T* ANY ROBIN FOR SEVERAL MONTHS.

THEN BRUCE WAYNE *ADOPTS* JASON TODD AND THERE'S SUDDENLY A *NEW* ROBIN.

THEN I READ ABOUT JASON'S *DEATH*, AND AGAIN THERE WAS NO ROBIN.

AND THEN THERE WERE ALL THOSE REPORTS ABOUT BATMAN ON THE *RAMPAGE*.

HE SEEMED TO GET SO MUCH MORE *VIOLENT* AFTER JASON DIED. IT GOT ME REALLY *WORRIED* FOR HIM.

YOU KNOW, SINCE I WAS ABLE TO READ, I *CLIPPED* EVERY ARTICLE I COULD ABOUT BATMAN AND ROBIN.

HECK, I USED TO *FANTASIZE* WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE TO *BE* ROBIN. I STUDY HARD. I GET MOSTLY A'S.

I WORK OUT. I'M NO CIRCUS ACROBAT, BUT I'M PRETTY GOOD, I GUESS.

BUT MOSTLY, I *READ* ABOUT YOU TWO. YOU'VE BOTH BEEN SO *IMPORTANT* TO ME IN SO MANY WAYS.

AND WHEN I SEE THAT WITHOUT ROBIN BATMAN IS GOING OFF THE DEEP END, I KNOW THERE'S SERIOUS TROUBLE.

SUPPOSING ALL THIS IS TRUE, WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?

I THINK HE *NEEDS* YOU, DICK. BUT HE DOESN'T NEED NIGHTWING.

HE NEEDS YOU AS *ROBIN!*

THE KIDS WERE TAKEN FROM THE BEDROOM WHILE THEIR *MOTHER* WAS DOWNSTAIRS.

AND THIS IS THE *ONLY* CLUE YOU FOUND?

WE'RE STILL NOT CERTAIN TWO-FACE IS BEHIND THE KIDNAPPING. LEAVING *CLUES* ISN'T HIS STYLE.

2B
CC

IT IS IF HE LEFT THEM TO *LURE* ME TO HIM WHILE I WAS TRYING TO DO THE *SAME*.

WAIT! WHAT DOES IT *MEAN*? DON'T LEA--

WHY DOES HE *ALWAYS* HAVE TO DO THAT?

YOU'RE STILL *CLEVER*, HARVEY. YOU KIDNAPPED *TWO* CHILDREN, SO YOU USED A COMMON CHILDREN'S *WORD GAME* TO SHOW WHERE YOU HID THEM.

WORDS AND NUMBERS ARE USED LIKE *PICTURES*. YOU DREW 2B OVER TWO C'S.

OR "*TO BE OVER TWO SEAS.*" TWO SEAS -- THE *TWIN RIVERS*. AND THE *ONLY* THING *OVER* THEM IS *HAWK BRIDGE*.

AS IN *KITTY HAWK*. THE PERFECT PLACE TO HIDE *TWINS* NAMED ALAN AND RICHARD -- THE *WRIGHT BROTHERS*.

NOT BAD, HARVEY. *TWO* CLUES FOR THE PRICE OF ONE.

IF HE KIDNAPPED THOSE KIDS TO *LURE* ME HERE...

...HE PROBABLY SET SOME KIND OF *TRAP* BEFORE TAKING OFF.

CLUB GEMINI. THAT'S WHERE HE'S GONE.

WHERE IS IT?

...HE TOOK MY *BAIT!*

WHATEVER YOU DO, *DON'T* MOVE. THERE'S A *GRENADE* TIED TO THE ROPES.

I'M PUSHING IT DOWN WHILE CUTTING THE ROPE. IF YOU *LISTEN* TO ME, YOU'LL MAKE IT OUT ALIVE.

TWO-FACE REMOVED THE *PIN*, BUT THE ROPE TYING IT TO YOU IS ALSO PRESSING DOWN THE TRIGGER MECHANISM.

SO DON'T BE A HERO, OKAY? JUST DO AS I SAY, JASON--

JASON?!? MY GOD! OH, MY GOD.

BA WHAAM

STAY HERE. I'LL RADIO FOR THE *POLICE* TO GET YOU.

DON'T MOVE UNTIL THEY ARRIVE.

WHAT'S THIS? THE SLOTS ARE SILENT. THE BLACKJACK TABLES HAVE FOLDED. ALL ASLEEP AT THE WHEEL? THE ROULETTE WHEEL, THAT IS.

THE *WONDERS* OF ETHER. WERE YOU ALL AWARE THAT ETHER IS A COMPOUND OF *TWO CHEMICALS*: SULFURIC ACID AND ALCOHOL?

MIX THEM TOGETHER, AND I GET TO STEAL TWENTY-TWO MILLION WITHOUT CONTEST.

TOO EASY. THIS HAS BEEN FAR TOO EASY.

AS IF IT WERE A TR--

PRIVA

BATMAN! HE SET THIS UP TO *LURE* ME HERE.

VERY GOOD, OLD FOE. BUT WHERE *ARE* YOU NOW?

OF COURSE--HE TOOK *MY* BAIT. WENT AFTER THE BRATS. WELL, LET HIM HAVE THEM.

PRIVATE

I'VE DONE *MORE* THAN WELL FOR *MYSELF*.

I'VE GOT TWENTY-TWO MILLION WAITING FOR ME BEHIND THIS DOOR.

WHAM

HE SET A TRAP FOR ME, AND I BEAT HIM. AT HIS OWN GAME.

EVEN IF THE GRENADES *DON'T* GET HIM, I'VE STILL WON.

B-BUT I CAN'T PROCEED.

NOT YET. NOT WITHOUT *MY COIN* TELLING ME TO.

TWENTY-TWO MILLION RIDES ON THIS.

NO, IT'S TOO MUCH. I CAN'T TAKE THE RISK. I CAN'T.

ROBIN? YOU WANT ME TO GO BACK TO BEING ROBIN?

I CAN'T. JUST AS I CAN'T GO BACK TO BEING *THIRTEEN* AGAIN.

BUT YOU'RE RIGHT-- BATMAN NEEDS ME.

AND MAYBE INSTEAD OF ARGUING WITH HIM, I SHOULD TRY TO *HELP* HIM.

IF HE'LL ACCEPT MY HELP.

I GUESS IT'S TIME TO SHOW YOU SOMETHING ... DOWN HERE--

IT'S CALLED *THE BATCAVE!*

IT'S *INCREDIBLE!* LOOK AT ALL THOSE COMPUTERS. LOOK AT THE TROPHIES. LOOK HOW BIG IT IS.

I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M ACTUALLY HERE.

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ROBIN--?

THOSE *WERE* THE DAYS.

BUT THOMAS WOLFE WAS RIGHT... YOU CAN'T GO HOME AGAIN.

AND YOU *MUST* GO ON.

NO, NOT NIGHTWING. DICK, DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND--?

BATMAN NEEDS ROBIN!

DOESN'T ANYONE UNDER-STAND?

PERHAPS, YOUNG MAN. PERHAPS MASTER DICK UNDERSTANDS PROFOUNDLY--

--PERHAPS THAT IS WHY HE BROUGHT YOU HERE.

I MADE A MISTAKE. I COULD HAVE CALLED GORDON TO HANDLE THE *RESCUE*, OR TO HAVE HIS MEN STAKE OUT *CLUB GEMINI*.

I ALMOST HAD THE MONEY. TWENTY-TWO MILLION IN MY HANDS, AND THEN...

...TONIGHT AT CLUB GEMINI, ONLY TO ESCAPE AT THE LAST MINUTE. MEANWHILE, ACROSS TOWN...

BUT, BECAUSE I'VE BEEN TRYING TO DO *EVERYTHING* MYSELF, TWO-FACE GOT AWAY.

HE GOT THE KIDS AND HE KEPT THE MONEY. HE *WON*-- JUST AS HE *ALWAYS* DOES.

AND *YOU'VE* ABANDONED ME, TOO. WHY WON'T YOU *TALK* TO ME NOW THAT I *NEED* YOU?

BATMAN SUCCESSFULLY RESCUED YOUNG RICHARD AND ALAN WRIGHT WHO HAD--

I CAN'T *HIDE* FROM IT ANY LONGER. I HAVEN'T BEEN THE SAME SINCE... JASON DIED.

BUT *WHAT* DO I DO ABOUT IT?

WHAT?!?

SQUEEE SKRAWWKK WELL, WELL, HARVEY, LONG TIME. IT'S YOUR OLD SUBCONSCIOUS AGAIN, LIVE AND IN PERSON.

SO, WE WANT TO KILL THE MEAN OLD BLACK BAT, EH?

TELL YOU WHAT, PAL--HERE'S WHAT WE'RE GONNA DO!

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BATMAN®

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Batman: A Lonely Place of Dying · Part 3 of 6

DC COMICS AREN'T JUST FOR KIDS!

ALFRED, IT'S ALMOST *TWO* IN THE *MORNING*. WE SHOULD HAVE *HEARD* FROM THEM BY NOW.

SOMETHING'S HAPPENED.

WHAT DO WE DO?

MASTER TIMOTHY, WE WAIT HERE AS I *ALWAYS* DO.

PATIENTLY.

A LONELY PLACE OF DYING

Chapter five: REBIRTH

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BUT YOU *KNOW* HE AND DICK'VE GONE AFTER TWO-FACE. YOU KNOW THE *DANGER*.

HOW CAN YOU JUST PUT IT OUT OF YOUR MIND?

IT'S *NEVER* OUT OF MY THOUGHTS. *NEVER*. IT *CONSUMES* ME.

I SPEND EACH EVENING *FEARING* THE WORST...

...AND PRAYING FOR THAT FEELING OF *RELIEF* I GET WHEN MASTER BRUCE RETURNS.

NO MATTER HIS CONDITION.

TIMOTHY, IF YOU DWELL ON WORST-CASE SCENARIOS, YOU CAN *WORRY* YOURSELF TO AN EARLY GRAVE.

I'M SORRY. I'M *REALLY* SORRY. BUT THIS IS SO *NEW* TO ME.

MAYBE SOMEDAY I CAN FIGURE OUT HOW TO DO WHAT YOU DO...

BUT RIGHT NOW WE *KNOW* WHERE HE AND DICK ARE.

AND I KEEP THINKING THEY'RE IN *TROUBLE*.

I'VE *GOT* TO DO SOME-THING.

TIM, DON'T. YOU KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO JASON.

OF COURSE I DO. BUT IT'S LIKE I SAID TO DICK.

BATMAN NEEDS HELP.

BATMAN NEEDS ROBIN.

"DON'T WAIT, QUIT STALLING. KILL THEM NOW WHILE YOU HAVE THE CHANCE." THE VOICE (IS IT COMING FROM BEHIND HIM OR INSIDE HIS HEAD HE WONDERS) URGES HIM TO DETONATE THE EXPLOSIVES AND BE DONE WITH IT.

DENT ROLLS THE THIN WAFER OF SILVER BETWEEN HIS FINGERS. IT IS TIME TO MAKE A DECISION.

SHUT UP, *SHUT UP!!* I--I KNOW WHAT TO DO.

BUT THERE ARE *PRIORITIES.* THERE ARE *PROCEDURES!*

WITHOUT PROCEDURE THERE IS *ANARCHY.* SYSTEMS FALL APART.

I WAS A *LAWYER* LONG ENOUGH TO KNOW THESE THINGS CANNOT BE LEFT TO...

...CHANCE.

UNNHHHH--

THUNK

WAKE UP. I NEED YOU.

YOU SEE? FOLLOW PROCEDURE AND IT ALL WORKS OUT.

IT'S ALMOST TWO A.M.. *NOW* THEY CAN DIE.

THIS IS *WRONG*. I SHOULDN'T BE *DOING* THIS.

ALFRED, YOU *HAVE* TO.

SINCE THAT NIGHT AT THE *CIRCUS* WHEN I FIRST SAW HIM SWOOPING DOWN FROM THE DARKNESS... FROM THE POINT DICK JOINED HIM--

...BATMAN AND ROBIN HAVE MEANT *EVERYTHING* TO ME.

I'VE FOLLOWED THEM BOTH... I KNOW THEM SO WELL. I KNEW WHEN DICK LEFT TO BECOME NIGHTWING.

I KNEW WHEN JASON CAME AND BECAME ROBIN... AND I KNEW WHEN JASON DIED.

...BUT I WANTED BATMAN AND ROBIN BACK TOGETHER THE WAY THEY *SHOULD* BE.

AND I SAW HOW BATMAN *CHANGED* WITHOUT THERE BEING A ROBIN TO CARE ABOUT.

LOOK, I NEVER *WANTED* THIS FOR *MYSELF*...

AND IF DICK WON'T BECOME ROBIN AGAIN...

...SOMEONE ELSE *HAS* TO!

THIS WAS A BEAUTIFUL HOUSE. MY GRANDFATHER BEGAN CONSTRUCTION ON IT IN 1899...

...AND COMPLETED IT TWENTY MONTHS LATER. *TWO* YEARS' WORK BRIDGING *TWO* CENTURIES.

I HATE DESTROYING ANYTHING SO... *SYMMETRICAL.*

BUT THEN I HAVE NO CHOICE!

THE *RULES* MUST BE FOLLOWED. TO REFUSE--

--INVITES THE *DESTRUCTION* OF EVERYTHING I HOLD DEAR.

NOOO!!

TWO-FACE, IF BATMAN AND NIGHTWING ARE DEAD--

--ROBIN IS GOING TO MAKE YOU PAY!

I WAS *WONDERING* WHEN THE BRAT WOULD SHOW HIS LITTLE CHERUBIC FACE.

YOU'VE BEEN *HIDING* FOR MONTHS NOW.

GET *DETENTION*? HAVE TO STAY IN AFTER SCHOOL?

YOU KNOW THERE WERE *RUMORS* ABOUT YOU.

RUMORS THAT YOU HAD *BOUGHT THE FARM*.

BUT I KNEW BETTER. IF YOU WERE TO DIE, *I'D* BE YOUR KILLER.

JUST AS I'M THE ONE WHO FINALLY MURDERED BATMAN.

LITHE AS EVER, BUT THERE'S SOMETHING *DIFFERENT* ABOUT YOU!

WHERE'S THE *QUIPS*, KID?

WHAM

YOU'RE ALWAYS SPOUTING THOSE AWFUL JOKES!

LOST YOUR SENSE OF HUMOR?

TWO-FACE--DON'T!

HE'S JUST A *BOY!*

NO! THERE HAS BEEN *ENOUGH* DEATH!

LET GO, YOU FOOL.

THAT'S *HIS* PROBLEM, OLD MAN.

ALFRED!!

ALFRED, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

MY STOMACH WILL ACHE A BIT, BUT I BELIEVE I WILL SURVIVE.

I WAS *WORRIED* FOR YOU.

SO WAS I. I'VE WORKED OUT. I'VE PRACTICED HALF MY LIFE... STUDIED KARATE...

...BUT I *STILL* DIDN'T KNOW IF I COULD REALLY HOLD MY OWN.

AND I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT I WOULD HAVE DONE *WITHOUT* YOU--

HUNH?

YOU FOUND SOMETHING?

SOME SORT OF BOARDED-UP WINDOW OR SOMETHING.

IT'S A *COAL-CHUTE.*

YEARS AGO FURNACES WERE HEATED BY COAL.

TRUCKS WOULD DELIVER IT EACH MONTH AND SEND IT THROUGH THE CHUTE TO A BASEMENT COAL BIN.

GREAT. THEN THERE'S A WAY INSIDE.

I DON'T KNOW IF THEY'RE ALIVE OR NOT, BUT BATMAN AND NIGHTWING ARE DOWN THERE.

I'VE *GOT* TO FIND THEM.

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BE CAREFUL, TIM.

I WILL.

JUST KEEP AN EYE ON TWO-FACE.

SO NARROW... BRUCE AND DICK COULD *NEVER* HAVE GOTTEN THROUGH THIS.

PLEASE, BE ALIVE. BE WELL.

I CONVINCED DICK TO *HELP* BATMAN. IF ANYTHING'S HAPPENED TO HIM BECAUSE OF ME--

NO! BRUCE IS ALIVE. DICK'S ALIVE. THEY CAN'T DIE!

BATMAN? NIGHTWING? CAN YOU *HEAR* ME?

;chak; ;chak; HERE... *;chak;* ...HERE...

BATMAN? WHERE--?

:CHOKK: UNDER THE CROSSBEAMS...

ARE YOU BOTH ALL RIGHT?

...CAN'T MOVE... PINNED.

AND I CAN'T MOVE THE BEAMS WITHOUT THE ROCKS FALLING ON YOU.

JUST LIE THERE. I'LL HAVE TO CLEAR THE BEAMS BEFORE I CAN GET TO YOU.

TWO-FACE...:CHOK: WHERE IS HE?

I LEFT HIM WITH ALFRED. THE POLICE SHOULD BE COMING.

POLICE? WH-WHO ARE YOU?

...

ROBIN.

FOR NOW, JUST CALL ME ROBIN.

I'VE GOT THE ROCKS OFF THE BEAMS.

BATMAN, HOW ARE YOU TWO DOING?

BATMAN!!

BATMAN!!

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UNHHH UNHHH UNHHHH

DID IT... I DID IT.

CAN YOU MOVE?

I DON'T KNOW *WHO* YOU ARE--

--BUT YOU'RE *NOT* ROBIN!

THERE *IS* NO MORE ROBIN!

BATMAN... I ONLY WANTED TO *HELP*.

I *CARE* ABOUT YOU. I CARE ABOUT ROBIN.

BRUCE--PLEASE *LISTEN* TO ME.

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

I *KNOW* YOU'RE BRUCE WAYNE. I KNOW NIGHTWING'S REALLY DICK GRAYSON.

AND... AND I KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO *JASON TODD!*

SIR, THANK HEAVEN TIMOTHY HELPED FREE YOU.

SIR, YOU SHOULD HAVE SEEN HIM CONFRONT TWO-FACE.

YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN PROUD.

HIS INSTINCTS FOR DETECTIVE WORK ARE ASTOUNDING.

AND HIS ACROBATIC ABILITY IS QUITE REMARKABLE.

HE'S ALMOST AS BRILLIANT AS WAS MASTER DICK.

WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO DO?

ONE BOY DIED WEARING THAT COSTUME.

I'M NOT TAKING THAT RISK A THIRD TIME.

I NEVER THOUGHT OF BECOMING ROBIN, BUT WITH YOU TRAINING ME, I CAN DO IT.

BATMAN HAS TO HAVE A ROBIN.

WHERE IS THAT WRITTEN IN STONE?

THERE'S NO MORE NEED FOR THERE TO BE A ROBIN --

--THAN THERE IS FOR A BATMAN?

B-BATMAN, IT'S HARD FOR ME TO SAY THIS TO YOU --

--BUT SINCE JASON... DIED, EVERYONE'S NOTICED HOW YOU'VE... CHANGED.

YOU NEED SOMEONE TO MAKE YOU *SLOW DOWN* JUST A BIT AND WONDER WHAT COULD HAPPEN.

I MEAN, HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU BEEN HURT THESE PAST MONTHS?

SO, FOR *MY* SAKE, I SHOULD PUT SOME *CHILD IN DANGER?*

NO, THAT'S NOT IT--

THIS *ISN'T* A DISCUSSION.

THEN IF NOT FOR YOU-- FOR THOSE *CRIMINALS* YOU HUNT DOWN.

YOU *WANT* THEM TO THINK THEY CAN GET AWAY WITH *MURDER?*

BATMAN, IF THEY THINK THEY CAN *KILL* SOMEONE LIKE ROBIN--

--WHO ARE THEY GOING TO HUNT DOWN *NEXT?*

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I DON'T KNOW *WHY* YOU DECIDED TO WEAR THAT COSTUME--

--BUT IT MAKES YOU A *SYMBOL*. JUST AS ROBIN WAS A SYMBOL.

OR SUPERMAN, OR NIGHTWING, OR THE *POLICEMAN* WHO WEARS *HIS* UNIFORM.

AND THIS ISN'T JUST A SYMBOL OF THE LAW, IT'S A SYMBOL OF *JUSTICE*.

WHEN ONE POLICEMAN IS KILLED, OTHERS TAKE HIS PLACE BECAUSE JUSTICE CAN'T BE STOPPED.

AND BATMAN *NEEDS* A ROBIN.

NO MATTER WHAT HE *THINKS* HE WANTS.

THE BOY SHOULD BE A *POLITICIAN!*

HE'D DO *MORE GOOD* WITH BRUCE.

WHAT I DO IS DANGEROUS!

I KNOW.

AND THAT'S *EXACTLY* WHY YOU NEED ME.

I'VE NO INTEREST IN *DISCUSSING* THIS.

NOT WHILE *HARVEY'S* STILL FREE.

WE TRACKED HIM HERE TO HIS HOME. I DON'T KNOW *WHERE* HE'S GONE TO.

DICK, I KNOW HOW WE CAN *FIND* HIM.

I SLIPPED A *TRACKING DISK* ON HIM WHILE WE WERE FIGHTING.

WE JUST HAVE TO *FOLLOW* HIS SIGNAL!

AND AS A REWARD YOU INSIST ON COMING WITH US.

NO, I'D *NEVER* DO THAT. I WANT TO *HELP*, NOT HOLD YOU BACK.

BUT I'D *LIKE* TO COME. AND I'D LIKE TO *LEARN* FROM YOU.

ALL RIGHT, WE'LL DISCUSS YOUR FUTURE LATER.

WHEN WE GET THERE, STAY *BACK*, OUT OF OUR WAY.

EVEN IF HE'S *RIGHT*, I DON'T WANT ANOTHER PARTNER.

BRUCE, FOR ONCE, THINK WITH YOUR *HEART*, NOT WITH *COLD LOGIC*.

HE DOESN'T *WANT* ME, BUT HE HASN'T SAID NO. SO JUST DO YOUR *BEST*...

...ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, THE *REST* WILL TAKE CARE OF ITSELF.

HE FOUND ME ALREADY? I HAVEN'T BEEN HERE *TWO* HOURS.

THE MAN'S A DEM--*NO!* CALM DOWN, CALM DOWN. I CAN STILL MAKE THIS WORK.

GEMINI AUTOMOBILE WRECKAGE SPECIALISTS

PARTS & SERVICE

YOU'VE LED ME THIS FAR. *WHAT* DO I DO NOW?

SPEAK TO ME! DON'T *ABANDON* ME NOW--*SPEAK TO ME!!*

SPORTS NEXT ON WGCN, GOTHAM'S ONLY 24-HOUR ALL-NEWS STATION.

STAY IN THE BATMOBILE. NIGHTWING AND I WILL TAKE CARE OF TWO-FACE.

OKAY, NO PROBLEM.

JUST BE *CAREFUL.*

BATMAN!! WATCH OUT!

NO!

TIM!?!

MY GOD! I KNEW I SHOULDN'T HAVE--

...BATMAN...

TIM? HOW--

WHEN I SAW THE BALL, I *JUMPED* OUT THE OTHER DOOR AND *UNDER* THE BATMOBILE.

IT WAS THE *ONLY* THING I COULD *THINK* OF.

I'M SORRY I COULDN'T WARN YOU IN TIME.

DON'T BE. YOU SAVED US *AND* YOURSELF.

BATMAN, UP HERE. TWO-FACE IS GONE.

HE HASN'T LEFT. HE'S HERE SOME-PLACE.

STAY WITH ME. DON'T WANDER.

NIGHTWING!

THOUGH I PREFERRED IT WHEN I HAD TO DEAL WITH JUST THE *TWO* OF YOU--

-- I'LL GLADLY TAKE ON ONE MORE FOR GOOD LUCK!

KRANG

MY GOOD LUCK. NOT YOURS!

BATMAN, WHAT DO WE DO?

BACK OFF. GET OUT OF THE WAY.

IT'S UP TO ME. I'M THE *ONLY* ONE WITH MANEUVERING ROOM.

NO! GET AWAY FROM ME!

HARVEY, GIVE IT UP.

THERE'S NO PLACE FOR YOU TO GO.

MY *COIN* WILL DETERMINE YOUR FATE.

NO, HARVEY, IT'S *YOUR* MISTAKE.

DON'T YOU KNOW, YOU CAN'T KILL BATMAN AND NIGHTWING?

OR ROBIN?

OR ROBIN!

WE DID IT. I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT IT WOULD *FEEL* LIKE--

--BUT IT'S *BETTER* THAN I COULD'VE IMAGINED.

MR. WAYNE, EVEN IF YOU *DON'T* WANT ME TO BE THE NEW ROBIN...

THIS HAS BEEN THE *GREATEST* DAY OF MY LIFE.

BRUCE, YOU HAVE TO ADMIT HE WAS GOOD.

AND FROM WHAT MASTER RICHARD SAYS, HE FOLLOWS YOUR ORDERS.

I DON'T *WANT* A PARTNER.

IT'S AS SIMPLE AS THAT.

AFTER ALL YOU'VE GONE THROUGH, I UNDERSTAND. IT'S STILL BEEN *WONDERFUL*.

TIM, I *SAID* IT WAS AS SIMPLE AS THAT, AND I WISH IT WERE.

UNFORTUNATELY, I'M NOT SURE IT IS.

FIRST, YOU KNOW MY IDENTITY.

I WOULDN'T *SAY* ANYTH--

I KNOW. BUT THAT *IS* A CONSIDERATION. BUT IT'S WHAT YOU SAID EARLIER...

I CREATED BATMAN TO PROJECT AN *IMAGE*. IT SUCCEEDED.

TO BE EFFECTIVE, THE *SYMBOL* HAS TO BE GREATER THAN THE REALITY.

BATMAN AND ROBIN. MAYBE THEY *HAVE* TO BE A TEAM.

THOUGH SOMETIMES I THINK I MAY HAVE CREATED A *FRANKENSTEIN*.

YOU MEAN I'M *IN*? I CAN BE THE *NEW ROBIN*?

I WANT TO TAKE THIS *ONE* DAY AT A TIME.

THANKS, MR. WAYNE... BRUCE.

I'LL TRY TO EARN YOUR TRUST.

WHOA--I STILL DON'T KNOW *ANYTHING* ABOUT YOU.

AND I'M *NOT* MAKING ANY COMMIT-MENTS.

BUT IF *YOU'RE* WILLING TO TRY--

--*WE'LL* TRY.

DENT, YOU'RE SUCH A FOOL. YOU WERE HIDING OUT, SAFE AND SOUND.

YOUR RIDICULOUS COIN TOLD YOU TO GIVE UP CRIME, FOREVER.

AND YOU WOULD HAVE, IF I HADN'T FOUND YOU.

OH, I KNEW YOU COULD NEVER HAVE KILLED BATS.

BUT YOU COULD KEEP HIM BUSY WHILE I MENDED FROM MY LAST ENCOUNTER WITH HIM.

IT'S SO GOOD KNOWING I COULD *CONTROL* THINGS, EVEN FROM MY *HOSPITAL BED.*

WHAT A SHAME HE'S GOT A NEW *BRAT* THOUGH.

STILL, EASY *COME*, EASY *GO!*

HAHAHA

NEXT ISSUE:

THE CRIMESMITH

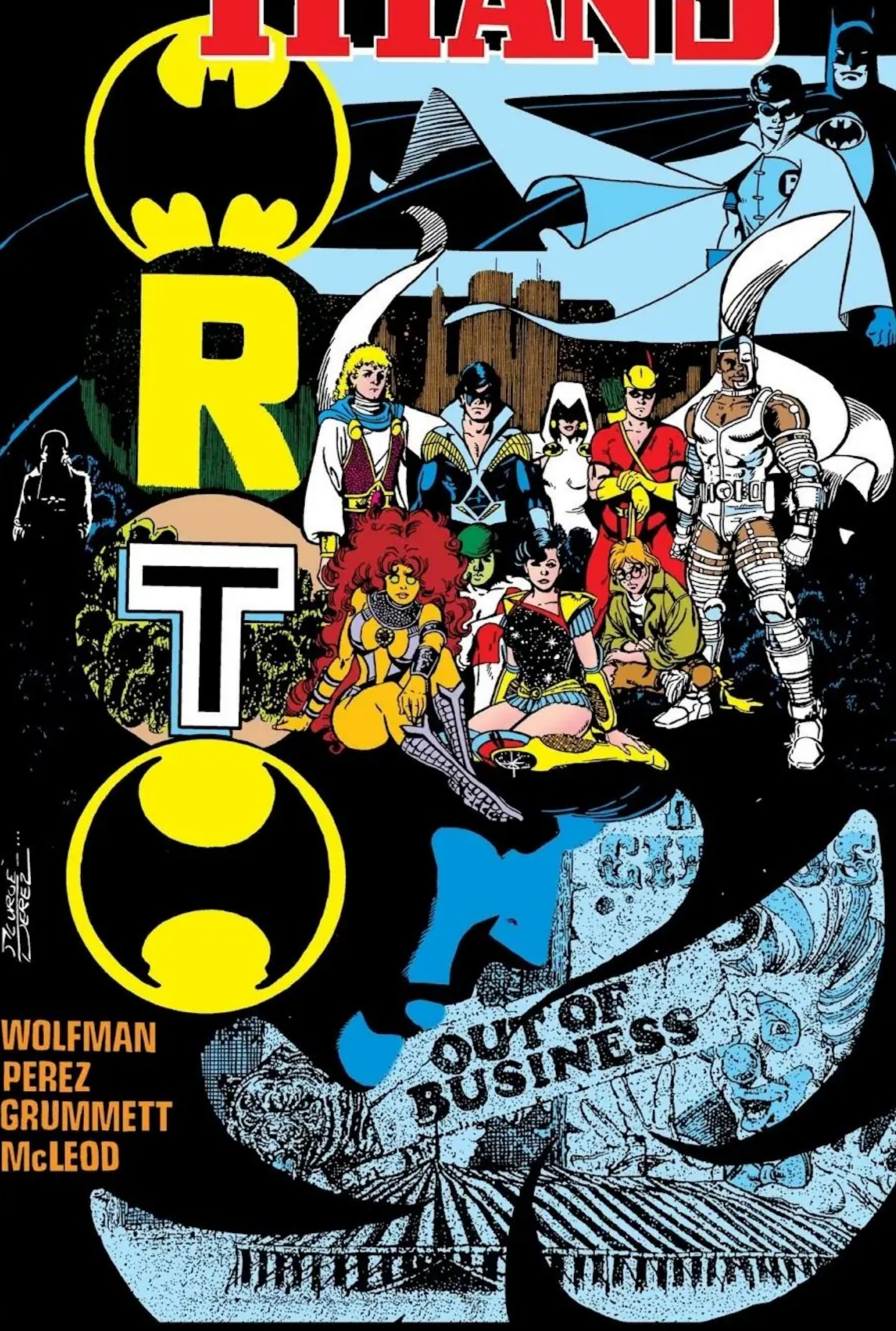
Batman® Annual

Bronze Age Classic Reprint

THE NEW TITANS

No. 60

NOV 89



Batman: A Lonely Place of Dying: Part 2 of 6

WOLFMAN
PEREZ
GRUMMETT
McLEOD

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I DON'T BELIEVE WE CAN FIND HIM.

I'M DOING THE *BEST* I CAN.

WARNING!

DON'T READ THIS TILL YOU'VE READ BATMAN #440!

I'M SORRY, VIC. I KNOW.

HOW ARE YOU *FEELING?*

GLAD TO BE OUTTA *BED.*

I WAS GETTIN' *STIR CRAZY.*

DICK'S *PAGER* ISN'T RESPONDIN'.

HE'S DEFINITELY TAKIN' THIS WHOLE *RETIREMENT* THING SERIOUSLY.

TRIED EVERYTHIN' I KNOW.

EVEN TRIED A SATELLITE TRACE OF HIS NIGHTWING COMPUTERS, BUT THEY'RE STILL HERE IN NEW YORK.

SUBJECT:
NIGHTWING

SEARCHING■

BUT WE *HAVE* TO FIND HIM.

I'VE GOT TO TELL HIM ABOUT THAT *KID* I SPOKE TO YESTERDAY.*

* *BATMAN* #440.

YEAH, OKAY. I'VE BEEN *HOLDIN' OFF* CALLIN' *WAYNE MANOR--*

--BUT I DON'T SEE THAT WE'VE GOT ANY *CHOICE.*

ACCESS: PHONE FILES

LOCATE: WAYNE, BRUCE

SEARCHING:

LOCATED: WAYNE, BRUCE
GOTHAM CITY

DIALING PHONE NUMBER...

RING RING RING

WAYNE RESIDENCE.

OH, YES, OF COURSE I REMEMBER YOU, SIR.

DIDN'T I ONCE *POLISH* YOUR ARMOR?

NO, NO... I HAVEN'T SEEN MASTER RICHARD SINCE HE LEFT A FEW *DAYS* AGO.

YES, AFTER THE ZUCCO FIASCO.*

* BATMAN #436-439.

ALAS, NO. MASTER BRUCE IS ALSO GONE.

SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE RETURN OF HARVEY DENT, I BELIEVE.

OKAY, THANKS. TAKE IT EASY, ALFRED.

THIS DOESN'T SOUND GOOD.

IT'S LIKE HE'S VANISHED OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

DONNA'S CHECKING HIS APARTMENT. ZIP AT WAYNE MANOR, HIS *GYM* SAYS HE HASN'T BEEN THERE IN A *WEEK*.

MAN, I'M DESPERATE. MEBBE DONNA'S FOUND SOMETHING... *ANYTHING*.

VIC? GUESS WHO JUST CAME BY?

NOPE, BUT CLOSE.

IT'S *ROY*-- SPEEDY. DICK SENT HIM OVER TO GET SOME *FILES*.

HE DIDN'T SAY.

SO WHAT'RE THE FILES FOR?

JUST TO GET UP TO DATE ON TITANS STUFF.

HE ASKED ME TO FILL IN WHILE HE WAS GONE--

--ASSUMING THE TITANS CURRENT HEAD HONCHO GIVES ME HIS *BLESSING*.

ROY, VIC WANTS TO KNOW WHERE DICK'S GONE?

THAT OKAY WITH *YOU*, VIC? /2

HEY, WE COULD *USE* YOU, PAL.

IF FACT, IF YOU WANNA TAKE OVER FROM ME, BE MY GUEST.

SO, YOU GUYS *FIND* ANYTHING YET?

WHAT'S JOEY SIGNING?

SOMETHING ABOUT A *BREAK-IN.*

PUT VIC ON HOLD.

HEY, A *SECRET SAFE.*

I'VE BEEN HERE A *DOZEN* TIMES AND NEVER KNEW!

HOW'D YOU *FIND* IT?

OH. A SMALL *PATH* IN THE DUST WHERE THE DOOR OPENED.

THAT BOY *NEVER* CLEANS, DOES HE?

I DIDN'T KNOW JOEY WAS A DETECTIVE.

HIS MOTHER'S ONE OF THE *BEST.*

SHE *TRAINED* HIM WELL.

JOEY WANTS TO KNOW IF *YOU* WANT TO *OPEN* IT, OR SHOULD HE?

I DON'T WANT TO FEEL *TOTALLY* USELESS HERE.

LET *ME* TRY.

DONNA, WHAT'S GOING ON?

WE FOUND SOME-THING.

DICK'S *SCRAPBOOK...*

YEAH, I SEE. SOMEBODY'S *RIPPED* OUT SOME PAGES.

DICK WOULD *NEVER* DO THAT.

THAT MEANS WHOEVER BROKE IN HERE KNOWS DICK AND NIGHT-WING ARE ONE AND THE SAME.

X'HAL!

A LONELY PLACE OF DYING

CHAPTER TWO: ROOTS

IT IS THE SMELL OF THE SAWDUST THAT BRINGS BACK THE FIRST MEMORIES; THE CLAMOR, THE CONFUSION AND THE CACOPHONY OF THE CIRCUS.

DARK EYES BLAZE WITH THE FIRE OF RECOGNITION.

HEAVY FOOTFALLS LIGHTEN. HIS SOMBER PACE QUICKENS.

DICK GRAYSON IS HOME.

BIG TOP

HALY CIRCUS

SEASON BEGINS OCTOBER 24TH

THE NEW TITANS™

Created by MARV WOLFMAN & GEORGE PEREZ

MARV WOLFMAN • writer/co-plotter
GEORGE PEREZ • co-plotter/penciller
BOB McLEOD • inker
JOHN COSTANZA • letterer
ADRIENNE ROY • colorist
JONATHAN PETERSON • assoc. editor
MIKE CARLIN, Big Cahuna

HOME... BUT THE YEARS HAVE NOT BEEN KIND.

THE PAINT IS PEELING WHEN ONCE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN FRESH AND PROMISING.

THE ANIMALS SLEEP WHEN THEY SHOULD BE PROWLING THEIR CAGES, SNARLING FOR THEIR DINNER.

THIS CIRCUS USED TO BE ANXIOUS WITH ANTICIPATION...

...NOW IT YAWNS INTO SLOWWW MOOOTIONNN.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THIS PLACE, HE WONDERS? HAS IT REALLY BEEN SO LONG?

EH?

ELINORE? IS THAT YOU?

YOU REMEMBERED ME?

WELL, CLICHÉS *ARE* BASED ON FACT, AREN'T THEY?

MAN, YOU REALLY *STINK*, NO OFFENSE.

DOESN'T THE BOSS ELEPHANT MAN WASH YOU DOWN?

YOU USED TO *LOVE* IT WHEN I SCRUBBED YOU CLEAN.

THEN I'D SADDLE UP YOUR *HOWDAH** AND WE'D RIDE THROUGH ALL THE SMALL TOWNS.

YOU REMEMBER HOW THEY ALL *STARED*. I'VE GOT TO ADMIT, I *LOVED* WATCHING THEM *GAWK* AT US.

*THE CHAIR CARRIED ON THE BACK OF AN ANIMAL.

OH, GOD--IT'S LIKE IT WAS *YESTERDAY*. MOM AND DAD DOING THEIR *PASSING LEAPS* OR *IRON-JAWING* IT.

ME HANGING AROUND CLOWN ALLEY WATCHING ALL THE JOEYS RUNNING THROUGH THEIR ROUTINES.

I DIDN'T THINK I *MISSED* IT THAT *MUCH*. BUT--

HEY, *YOU!* WHAT'RE YOU *DOIN'* HERE?

JACQUE!? IS THAT *YOU*!?

S

HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME? WHO ARE YOU?
DON'T YOU RECOGNIZE HIM? THAT'S DICK GRAYSON.
LITTLE DICKIE? C'MON -- NO WAY!
YEAH? YOU CALLIN' ME A LIAR.
C'MON -- TRY TO GET ME.
HA! SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE.
YOU ALWAYS FELL FOR THAT.
IT IS YOU, ISN'T IT? IT'S BEEN YEARS!
IT'S BEEN A LIFETIME. BUT I THOUGHT YOU TWO LEFT FOR CIRCUS DeVEGAS RIGHT AFTER I...WENT.
YOU KNOW JACQUE. SPEAKS TOUGH, BUT SOFT-HEARTED.
AND YOU, SOOSE, YOU TALK TOO MUCH.
THE BOSS NEEDED HELP, SO WE CAME BACK.
HEY, DICK -- HIYA, HIYA.
WHAT BRINGS YOU TO THIS DOG AND PONY SHOW?
GOD -- HARRY! YOU'RE STILL HERE?
YOU KNOW ME, DICKIE -- THEY TRIED USIN' THE CROWBAR BUT THEY STILL COULDN'T PUT ME OU --
HARRY?!?
HE'S ASLEEP?
HE'S DRUNK!
HIS USUAL STATE, THESE DAYS.

I READ ABOUT YOUR CLOSING DOWN, BUT I COULDN'T FIGURE OUT WHY.

NOW THAT I'M HERE, I'M BEGINNING TO UNDERSTAND.

OFFICE

NOT QUITE THE GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH, IS IT, DICK?

MR. HALY, WHEN DID IT GO WRONG?

HARRISON. HARRISON H. HALY, THE FIFTH. EVEN WHEN YOU WERE A *KID*, MR. HALY SOUNDED SO *FORMAL*.

HARRISON, OR HARRY. OKAY?

SO WHEN DID IT GO BAD? LAST FIVE-SIX YEARS, I THINK.

TOO MUCH TV, TOO MANY VIDEO GAMES. WHO KNOWS? BUT I CAN'T TURN A *PROFIT*. HELL, I CAN'T STAY EVEN.

SO I DECIDED TO SELL, BUT THE ONLY BIDDER WAS SOME *CORPORATION* WHO WANTED THEIR LOGO TATTOOED ON THE ELEPHANTS.

HALY CLOSING

LOOK, I DIDN'T WANT TO SELL, SO I CUT DOWN EXPENSES. WOULD'VE WORKED...

...EXCEPT FOR ALL THE *ACCIDENTS* WE'VE HAD.

ACCIDENTS?

YEAH. COST US A FORTUNE AND BROUGHT DOWN OUR SELLING PRICE.

YOU KNOW, SOMETIMES I SIT HERE AND JUST REMEMBER THE GOOD OLD DAYS.

WE WERE BARELY BREAKING EVEN BACK THEN, TOO--BUT MAN, WERE WE HAVING *FUN*.

AND WE CAN STILL HAVE FUN, KID.

WANT TO SEE THE *BEST* SHOW IN TOWN?

YOU HAVE TO ASK?

HE LEAVES, TRYING TO RECONCILE THE PAST AND THE PRESENT.

KIDS GROW UP AND CHANGE. BUT WHY SHOULD EVERYTHING DO THE SAME?

THE ANIMAL CAGES STINK WITH WASTE. WAS IT ALWAYS THIS WAY? AT TIMES LIKE NOW HE WISHES FOR NEVER-NEVER LAND.

HUNH? THAT SCREAM?

IT'S COMING FROM CLOWN ALLEY!

HALY C

YOU STUPID DRUNK--

--YOU'RE RUINING EVERYTHING!

DRINK YOURSELF TO DEATH, BUT DON'T PULL ME DOWN WITH YOU.

WILHELM, LEAVE HIM ALONE.

HE'S SICK, CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?

N-NO, I'M ALL RIGHT.

ALL RIGHT? YOU CAN BARELY STAND.

AND THE REST OF YOU --YOU'RE ALL LOSERS JUST LIKE HIM.

YOU'RE KEEPING THIS PONY SHOW ALIVE WHEN WE ALL KNOW IT SHOULD BE SOLD.

AND BEFORE YOU ALL DRAG IT INTO THE MUD.

YOU THINK I'M *SABOTAGING* US, DON'T YOU? JUST TO SCARE OFF *BUYERS*. BUT I'M *NOT*, PEDRO. I SWEAR I'M NOT.

YOU'RE ALL *JEALOUS*, THAT'S ALL.

MY CONTRACT SAYS IF HALY SELLS I'M *FREE* TO LEAVE AND MAKE IT IN THE *BIG TIME*--

--WHILE YOU'RE ALL *STUCK* IN THIS GOD-FORESAKEN HELL-HOLE.

BUT IT'S *NOT* OVER YET.

I-I NEED A *DRINK*.

FIGURES... NOTHING LEFT.

I MAY GET SOBER *DESPITE* MY BEST INTENTIONS.

WHY DON'T YOU JUST *BLOW* YOUR BRAINS OUT. IT'LL BE *EASIER* THAT WAY.

NICE GOING, HARRY.

OH, SHUT UP, ALL OF YOU, JUST *SHUT UP!*

LEAVE ME ALONE, TOM. JUST LEAVE ME BE.

MY *HEAD* HURTS SO *MUCH*.

IT WAS 1855 WHEN J.C. STODDARD FIRST RECEIVED A PATENT FOR THE STEAM CALLIOPE.

SINCE THEN ITS RINKY-TINK MUSIC HAS BROUGHT SMILES AND LAUGHS AT CIRCUSES EVERYWHERE...

THIS PLACE'S SUPPOSED TO BE *JINXED!*

THAT'S JUST AN OLD WIVES TALE!

I'LL PROTECT YOU IF SOMETHING HAPPENS.

CLICK

YOU THERE, IT'S STARTING.

TAKE A *SEAT.*

CLICK

PEANUTS! POPCORN! SOUVENIR PROGRAMS! FLASHLIGHTS!

GET YOUR *FLASH-LIGHTS* RIGHT HERE.

HE'S *GOT* TO BE HERE.

I CAN *FEEL* IT IN MY *BONES.*

LADEEES AND GENTLEMENNNN, CHILDREN OF ALLLLL AGES!

IT'S GREAT! IT'S STUPENDOUS! IT'S THE WORLD'S GREATEST SHOW!

THE HALY CIRCUS PROUDLY PRESENTS--

10

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--CIRCUS 2000!

THE AMAZING FEATS! THE WILD ANIMALS! THE LAUGHABLE CLOWNS.

IT'S THE SIGHTS AND SOUNDS THAT HAVE THRILLED GENERATIONS.

ALMOST ALL EYES ARE RIVETED TO THE MAIN RING.

ALMOST--BUT NOT ALL.

"WHERE IS HE," HE THINKS. "I KNOW HE'S HERE SOMEWHERE."

MR. MUSCLES -- "THE STRONGEST MAN ON EARTH" STRUGGLES TO LIFT A VOLKSWAGEN AND THREE FRIENDS HIGH INTO THE AIR.

AS THE CAR RISES, THE AUDIENCE STARES IN AWE.

"I DON'T SEE HIM," HE SAYS. "BUT WHERE ELSE COULD HE BE?"

AS TWO DOZEN CLOWNS STREAM OUT OF THE TINY VOLKSWAGEN, HIS GAZE PASSES SLOWLY OVER THE CROWD.

"THAT'S HIM? NO...

"MAYBE I WAS WRONG.

"MAYBE HE ISN'T HERE."

THEY GASP AS THE ACROBATS PASS QUICKLY ABOVE THEIR HEADS.

IF HE ISN'T--

"--THEN I'VE WASTED ALL THIS TIME.

"WAIT A SECOND-- OF COURSE.

"HE'S A MASTER OF DISGUISE.

"I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR DICK GRAYSON, BUT HE COULD BE ANYONE."

HE WOULDN'T *NEED* TO HIDE HIS IDENTITY HERE...

...SO THAT MEANS HE MUST BE DRESSED UP AS SOMETHING THAT *BELONGS* IN A CIRCUS.

"NO...NOT THE ROUSTABOUTS. THEY'RE TOO TALL."

UP--UP! TALK! *TALK* TO EVERY-ONE, GUNTHER.

YES, YES.

"THE VENDORS? NO...NOT THEM."

"HMMM. AFTER ALL THOSE YEARS AWAY FROM THE CIRCUS, HE'D *PROBABLY* WANT TO GET INTO THE THICK OF IT."

THERE, GUNTHER-- SHOW OFF FOR THE PEOPLE.

GURBEL-- COME HERE.

"THE CLOWNS?"

GURBEL-- STOP, STOP!

GURBEL-- DO AS I SAY!

GRAWWL

OMIGOD -- SHE'S GOING AFTER WILHELM.

DICK-- STOP!

THEY'RE BRINGING IN THE *TRANQ* GUNS.

C'MON, GURBEL, GET OFF HIM.

YOU *KNOW* YOU'RE A *BAD* CAT. MOVE AWAY, GURBEL.

WILHELM, HOW ARE YOU?

MY *NECK*.., HE'S TORN OPEN MY NECK!

NO CHOICE THEN.

STOP HIM.

WATCH OUT!

"NO GOOD. THEY MISSED. GURBEL'S RILED.

"THEY CAN'T STOP HIM.

"THEY NEED ME."

KEEP EVERYONE BACK.

I'LL GIVE THEM TIME TO *RELOAD*.

TH-THAT JUMP--

--THAT'S HIM!

IT'S GOT TO BE DICK!

NO, NO, GURBEL-- LUNCHING ON YOUR TRAINER IS DEFINITELY FROWNED UPON HERE.

I-I'VE GOT HIM. MOVE IN!

DON'T HURT HIM. GET HIM SEDATED!

STAKE THE NET-- FAST!

HOLD HIM STILL WHILE I TRANQ HIM.

WHAT IN HELL HAPPENED?

HOW'S WILHELM?

LORD, I DON'T BELIEVE IT--

--HE'S *DEAD!*

HIS NECK WAS *GOUGED* OUT. HE'S *DEAD.*

OHGODOH-GODOHGODOH-GODOHGOD!

HALY GIL

CLOSED

I DON'T HAVE THE *ENERGY* TO GO ON.

THAT WAS THE LAST STRAW.

I GIVE UP.

I SHOULD'VE SOLD WHEN I HAD THE *CHANCE.*

NOW *NOBODY* WANTS US.

I'M GOING TO HAVE TO DECLARE *BANK-RUPTCY.*

THE INSURANCE COMPANY SAID GURBEL WAS *RABID* BECAUSE WE DIDN'T TAKE PROPER CARE OF HIM.

THEY'VE *CANCELLED* OUR INSUR-ANCE.

AT LEAST *YOU* WERE HERE, DICK

IF GURBEL HAD GOTTEN TO THE *AUDIENCE...*

OH, WELL, IT'S OVER. WE *KNEW* IT HAD TO HAPPEN SOMEDAY.

I'M JUST GOING TO LOOK AROUND A BIT.

THERE ARE PEOPLE I WANT TO SAY *GOOD-BYE* TO.

SOMETHING'S DEFINITELY WRONG.

ACCIDENTS DON'T HAPPEN WITH SUCH FREQUENCY UNLESS THEY'RE *PLANNED.*

EH?

HEY, YOU! YOU DON'T BELONG HERE. GET *OUT* OF THERE.

SORRY, I CAN'T LEAVE.

I'VE GOT THINGS TO DO.

WHAT IN HELL--?

JOEY, STOP HIM BEFORE--

SORRY, IT'S ALREADY TOO LATE.

WHOA THERE.

I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE, KID--

YOU'RE *NOT* GOING TO FIND OUT, EITHER.

HE USED MY MOMENTUM TO *FLIP* ME. HE'S GOOD...

...BUT SO AM I. IF I DON'T LET GO, I CAN TURN HIS OWN TRICK AGAINST HIM.

OOOOFFF

OKAY, KID -- I THINK WE SHOULD *TALK.*

OH, THANK GOODNESS-- IT'S *YOU.*

DICK, I'VE BEEN DIGGING UP *PROOF...*

...I THINK THE OLD CLOWN *MURDERED* THE LION TAMER.

THAT BRAT TRYIN' TO SNEAK UNDER THE TENT?

LET *US* TEACH 'IM A LESSON.

NO... I'LL TAKE CARE OF THIS *MYSELF.*

YEAH, SUIT YOURSELF.

HOW DO YOU KNOW ME? AND WHO ARE *YOU?*

DICK, *NO* TIME FOR THAT.

WE KNOW WHO THE KILLER IS, SO *GET* HIM.

THEN YOU'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO BATMAN. HE *NEEDS* YOU.

WHAT ARE YOU *TALKING* ABOUT? *WHO* ARE YOU?

I WAS LISTENING AND HEARD SOMEONE SAY THE CAT MIGHT'VE BEEN *DOPED.*

SO I SEARCHED THE GARBAGE BAGS FULL OF *FOOD* AND FOUND SOMETHING.

IT'S HARRY THE CLOWN'S *LIQUOR FLASK.*

IT MUST HAVE SOMETHING IN IT THAT DROVE THE CAT *CRAZY.*

YOU *STILL* CAN'T PROVE HARRY'S RESPONSIBLE.

HE'S A *DRUNK,* BUT HE'S NOT *VICIOUS.*

BUT, DICK, HE AND THE LION TRAINER *FOUGHT* LIKE CRAZY.

I KNOW YOU *CARE* FOR HIM, BUT THE KILLER'S *GOT* TO BE HARRY.

ANALYZING IT SHOULD *PROVE* IT WASN'T AN ACCIDENT, WHICH'LL *CLEAR* THE CIRCUS. RIGHT?

HEY! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

YOU *STAY PUT.* WE'LL TALK LATER.

I'VE GOT THINGS TO CHECK OUT.

HARRY, YOU WANTED TO SEE US? YOU OKAY?

NAH, LOOK AT 'IM. HE'S NINE SHEETS TO THE WIND.

GOOD REASON, TOO.

YOU KILLED WILHELM, DIDN'T YA? KILLED 'IM BY DOPIN 'GURBEL.

MAN, YOU RUINED IT FOR US ALL.

YOU STUPID, DRUNKEN SOT.

I--I AM...

HEAVEN HELP ME, I AM.

D-DICK FOUND THIS. IT'S MY BOOZE FLASK.

AN' MY MAKE-UP'S ALL OVER IT.

BUT I DON'T REMEMBER ANY OF IT.

DICK GAVE IT TO ME... TOLD ME I HAD TO DO WHAT WAS RIGHT.

HE ALSO SAID MAYBE SOMEONE ELSE WAS WEARING MY STUFF.

DICK THINKS THERE ARE TESTS TO PROVE IF MY SKIN WAS UNDER THE MAKE-UP OR NOT.

YOU KNOW LIKE I DO THERE'S NO SUCH TESTS.

'SIDES, THE FOOD WASTE WOULD'VE COVERED IT ALL UP.

WHY DON'T YOU JUST CONFESS AN' GET THE CIRCUS OFF THE HOOK.

WAIT A MINUTE! NOBODY KNEW THE FLASK WAS FOUND IN THE FOOD WASTE. NOBODY...EXCEPT THE PERSON WHO PUT IT THERE!

STUPID SLIP-- REALLY STUPID.

SAMSON, MAKE IT LOOK LIKE SUICIDE.

SAMSON, I DIDN'T THINK *YOU* WERE INVOLVED WITH THIS, TOO.

SORRY I GOT TO DO THIS--YOU WERE ONE OF THE BEST.

THANKS, SAMSON.

BUT I'M AFRAID YOU GOT THE *WRONG* CLOWN!

NO! YOU CAN'T GET AWAY.

YOU CAN'T STOP US!

SAMSON-- I ALREADY HAVE!

DICK, ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

I CAN'T BELIEVE SAMSON AND PEDRO--

WHERE IS HE? WHERE'S PEDRO?

ARRGGHHH

WH-WHAT WAS THAT?

IT'S COMING FROM OUT BACK.

I--I DON'T SEE ANYTHING.

YOU? WHAT HAPPENED?

HE WAS TRYING TO GET AWAY.

I STOPPED HIM.

YOU AND I HAVE GOT TO TALK.

DICK, THANK YOU FOR BELIEVING IN ME.

BUT HOW DID YOU FIGURE IT OUT?

HARRY, YOU COULDN'T HAVE HAD THE FLASK.

I FOUND IT BEFORE WILHELM WAS MURDERED AND TOSSED IT OUT.

AND WHEN I FOUND IT LATER-- MY PRINTS WEREN'T ON IT.

THAT MEANT SOME-ONE SAW ME GET RID OF IT AND RETRIEVED IT.

I REMBERED PEDRO SAW ME, SO I CHECKED HIS PAST EMPLOYMENT RECORDS.

HE HAD WORKED FOR THE CORPORATION WHO TRIED TO BUY OUT HALY.

THEY FIGURED IF THE CIRCUS CLOSED, THEY COULD BUY WHAT WAS LEFT FOR PENNIES.

YOU CREEP! IF YOU WEREN'T AROUND WE WOULD'A SUCCEEDED.

NAH! YOU WERE SLOPPY, PEDRO. THE POLICE WOULD'VE FIGURED IT OUT IF I HADN'T.

WOW! AND I THOUGHT HARRY DID IT.

MAN, DICK IS GOOD.

HE'S THE BEST!

THANK YOU, DICK.

MY PLEASURE, HARRY. I THINK I'M *HAPPIER* NOW THAN I'VE EVER BEEN.

OFFICE

OH, NO--HE'S *JOINING* THE CIRCUS... HE'LL *NEVER* HELP BATMAN NOW.

WE'VE GOT ALL THE *PAPERS* DRAWN UP. WE'LL SEND IT TO YOUR *LAWYER*.

DON'T BE SILLY. YOU'RE *FAMILY*.

I'LL HANDLE IT MYSELF.

YOU TAKE CARE.

YOU TOO, DICK. I HOPE YOU'LL COME AROUND MORE OFTEN NOW.

HUNH?

DICK, YOU *DIDN'T* REJOIN THE CIRCUS?

BETTER. I'M BECOMING ITS *CO-OWNER*.

NOW, WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

THAT DOESN'T MATTER NOW.

DICK, *LOOK* AT THIS PLEASE.

KID, I *DON'T* LIKE GAMES.

NEITHER DO I.

IT'S *IMPORTANT*. I NEED YOU.

BATMAN NEEDS YOU.

MY GOD -- HOW DID YOU GET THESE?

* YOU'D KNOW IF YOU READ BATMAN #440.

OKAY, WHAT'S GOING ON?

YOU KNOW AS WELL AS I DO THAT HE HASN'T BEEN ACTING RIGHT SINCE *JASON* DIED.

YOU KNOW--?

LOOK, I KNOW YOU'RE NIGHT-WING. YOU *USED* TO BE ROBIN.

THEN JASON TODD BECAME ROBIN, AND WHEN *HE* DIED, BRUCE WAYNE WENT TO PIECES.

DICK, DON'T YOU SEE-- HE NEEDS ROBIN.

HE NEEDS HIM TO REMEMBER WHAT HE *USED* TO BE.

BEFORE HIS PARENTS DIED.

THESE PICTURES. *TWO-FACE* IS BACK IN TOWN, ISN'T HE?

YOU CAN TELL, JUST FROM THEM?

WOW! YOU'RE *BETTER* THAN I EVER THOUGHT.

I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU LEARNED EVERYTHING--

I CAN *EXPLAIN* LATER. ON THE WAY TO GOTHAM CITY.

I'M *NOT* SURE WHAT CAME DOWN BETWEEN YOU AND BRUCE, BUT YOU *DO* OWE HIM SOMETHING, DON'T YOU?

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO PAY HIM BACK FOR *RAISING* YOU ALL THOSE YEARS.

WELL...?

"I SEE YOU, OLD FRIEND.

"HIDING THERE IN THE COLD, DARK NIGHT.

"WHEREVER YOU GO, I'LL BE WITH YOU.

"YOU CAN'T ESCAPE ME...

"... AND PERHAPS I CAN'T ESCAPE YOU.

"WE'RE INEXTRICABLY LINKED.

"AND THAT'S JUST THE WAY I LIKE IT."

To be continued in BATMAN #441
NEW TITANS "A Lonely Place of DYING"

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DEC 89

THE NEW TITANS®

Batman®: A Lonely Place of Dying: Part 4 of 6

PEREZ · WOLFMAN · GRUMMETT · McLEOD

THE NEW TITANS™

Created by MARV WOLFMAN & GEORGE PÉREZ

HE HEARS THE VOICE BEHIND HIM, CALLING OUT TO HIM, BESEECHING HIM. "NO, NOT NIGHTWING. DICK, DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND--?

"BATMAN NEEDS ROBIN!"

WHAT?

DICK, PLEASE-- *TAKE THIS.* IT *BELONGS* TO YOU!

A LONELY PLACE OF DYING: PART FOUR GOING HOME!

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WHERE DID YOU GET THIS?
FROM THE CASE IN THE TROPHY ROOM. I-IT'S YOURS!
I THOUGHT--
NO! YOU DIDN'T THINK. THAT'S THE PROBLEM...
SIR. THE LAD MAY HAVE A POINT.
MASTER BRUCE HAS NOT BEEN THE SAME--
--SINCE HE LOST ROBIN...
...A SECOND TIME.
IT'S TRUE, DICK. HE NEEDS A PARTNER AGAIN.
SOMEONE TO CARE ABOUT... SOMEONE WHO CARES ABOUT HIM.
I DON'T BELIEVE THIS. THAT MAN RAISED ME.
I'VE GONE THROUGH HELL WITH HIM AND BECAUSE OF HIM.
DON'T LECTURE ME ABOUT HIM UNTIL YOU'VE CARED FOR HIM AND LOVED HIM AS LONG AS I HAVE.
AND THE FIRST THING HE TAUGHT ME WAS HOW TO BE A MAN--
--NOT HOW TO BECOME A KID ALL OVER AGAIN.
WHEN JASON DIED, HE TOOK ROBIN WITH HIM.
AND NO MATTER HOW MUCH ANYBODY MAY WANT IT--
--YOU CAN'T BRING BACK THE DEAD.

:ICK, PLEASE-- I DIDN'T MEAN--

I DON'T WANT...

I... I WAS ONLY THINKING OF THE *TEAM*...

OF WHAT BATMAN AND ROBIN *MEANT!*

YOU CAN'T LET A *LEGEND* DIE LIKE THAT, DICK...

...YOU... CAN'T... LET... THEM... JUST... DIE.

LAD, AT TIMES MASTER DICK CAN BE AS *STUBBORN* AS HIS MENTOR. THEY SHARE AT LEAST *THAT* TRAIT IN COMMON.

CONSIDER YOUR *SUCCESS*. THEY SHALL BE WORKING TOGETHER AGAIN.

YEAH...

...BUT I STILL CAN'T HELP FEELING THAT'S *NOT* WHAT BATMAN NEEDS.

SHE FEELS THE FIRST CHILL OF AUTUMN EVEN THROUGH THESE FOOT-THICK WALLS. ACROSS THE RIVER RAVEN SENSES COUPLES HUDDLING TOGETHER FOR WARMTH...

...AS WELL AS COMFORT. FOR AN INSTANT THIS EMPATH FEELS SOME SMALL TINGE OF LONELINESS AND DESIRE.

RRINGG RRINGG

TITANS TOWER. HOW MAY I HELP YOU?

HELLO?

NIGHTWING! IS HE THERE?

NO. NOT AT THE MOMENT.

CAN I TAKE A *MESSAGE*?

NO. THIS CONCERNS ONLY *HIM*.

PERHAPS YOU CAN *EXPLAIN* WHAT YOU WANT.

I CAN *NOTIFY* HIM THROUGH OUR SPECIAL *RADIO BAND*.

WHILE YOU *TRACE* MY LOCATION?

NICE TRY, BUT I *INVENTED* THAT PLOY.

NO... I THINK I'LL JUST LEAVE YOU A MESSAGE.

SQUEEEEE

AZAR!

HELLO? HELLO? HE IS GONE.

BUT DID YOU HEAR THAT?

YEAH, YOU SET UP THE RELAY JUST IN TIME, WITCH. GOOD GOIN!

AN' I THINK I GOT ENOUGH TO TRACE.

GUYS, IF YOU'RE ALL ON LINE, I THINK THIS MAY BE THE SAME CREEP KORY SPOKE TO.

THAT KID OBVIOUSLY KNOWS WHO DICK IS. THE QUESTION IS, WHO'S HE WORKIN' FOR?

VIC, YOU TRACE THAT CALL. I'M GOING TO CHECK OUT THAT SQUEAL AS SPEEDY!

I'VE GOT A HUNCH ABOUT IT.

SARAH, LISSEN-- I'LL CALL YOU A CAB TO GET THOSE KIDS HOME. I GOTTA GET GOIN!

VIC, DON'T WORRY. WE'LL BE FINE.

BESIDES, THIS IS A GOOD OBJECT LESSON.

YOU'RE THE TITANS' LEADER. YOU'RE SHOWING RESPONSIBILITY.

CAN'T HURT FOR THE KIDS TO SEE HOW IMPORTANT THAT IS.

CAN'T BELIEVE I'M BEIN' USED AS A ROLE MODEL.

THE WORLD'S REALLY GOTTA BE IN SERIOUS TROUBLE NOW.

ABOVE HER DARK CLOUDS BLOCK OUT A STAR-FILLED NIGHT. BELOW HER THE TWINKLING LIGHTS OF A SPRAWLING CITYPLEX.

NORMALLY, STARFIRE WOULD TAKE THE TIME TO APPRECIATE THIS CITY'S MAGNI-FICENCE...

NORMALLY. BUT NOT TONIGHT.

KORY! KORY! WAIT FOR ME.

GLIDING ISN'T NEARLY AS FAST-PACED AS *FLYING*.

WORRIED ABOUT DICK?

YEAH. AND THAT BOY WHO WAS *FOLLOWING* HIM!

AND NOW THAT *PHONE* CALL.

THE TROUBLE IS, I *DON'T* KNOW WHERE DICK'S GONE.

I CAN'T *HELP* HIM.

AND I FEEL *SO HELPLESS*.

JUST THINK OF IT *THIS* WAY, KORY. WHOEVER'S DOING THIS IS GOING TO LEARN THAT WHEN HE TAKES ON *ONE* TITAN --

--HE TAKES US *ALL* ON!

VICTOR, DID YOU *FIND* ANYTHING?

YEAH, BUT IT'S A *DEAD END.*

WHOEVER MADE THAT CALL PARKED HIS VEHICLE HERE.

THEN HE SHIMMIED UP THE POLE AND PLUGGED INTO THE PHONE LINES.

USING A ROADSIDE POLE WOULD PREVENT ANY POSSIBLE *ID* PROBLEMS.

ANYONE DRIVING BY WOULD BE *LONG GONE* BY THE TIME HE WAS DONE.

THEN, JUDGING FROM THE ANGLE OF THE GROOVE, HE TOOK OFF FAST.

NO TELLING WHERE HE IS NOW.

WHAT ABOUT FOLLOWING HIS TRACKS?

IMPOSSIBLE, KORY.

ONCE HE MERGED WITH THE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC, WHATEVER TRACKS HE MIGHT HAVE LEFT WERE COVERED UP.

THE GUY'S *GOOD*, I'LL GIVE 'IM THAT.

HEY, CHEER UP-- MEBBE HARPER CAME UP WITH SOMETHING.

WHY AREN'T I *HOLDING* MY BREATH?

SO, DO WE GET GOOD NEWS...

...OR DO WE JUST JUMP IN THE FURNACE?

HOW DOES "SHE'S A 'LITTLE BIT' PREGNANT," SOUND?

MY HUNCH WAS RIGHT-- IT WAS A CODED MESSAGE SENT THROUGH A MODEM.

AS FOR WHAT IT MEANT--HECK, I'M STILL TRYING TO FIGURE OUT WHAT A YAHOO SERIOUS IS.

BUT JOEY SEEMS TO HAVE GLOMMED ONTO SOMETHING.

THE VOICE ITSELF WAS MUFFLED AS IF TRYING TO DISGUISE ITSELF. BUT I SENSED IT WAS DISTURBED...

...FILLED WITH MANY CONTRADICTORY EMOTIONS.

THAT DOESN'T SOUND LIKE THE KID WHO VISITED KORY.

SO NOW WE GOT TWO PEOPLE OUT THERE LOOKIN' FOR DICK.

SO, WHAT DID YOU FIND, JOE?

OKAY, SUE ME FOR FLUNKING "HANDSIGNS OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS." WHAT'S HE SIGNING?

HE'S SPELLING OUT DICK'S NAME.

YEAH, SO WE GOTTA FIND HIM. WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

R-A-V-E-N?

YES, JOSEPH-- I UNDER-STAND.

THE RAIN HAS FINALLY ENDED IN GOTHAM CITY, BUT THE CLOUDS ARE STILL LOW AND DARK...

...REFLECTING AN ALL-TOO FAMILIAR BEACON WHICH SHIMMERS INTO VIEW.

NOTHING, COMMISSIONER.

IF HE SEES IT, HE'S NOT RESPONDING.

SORRY, NIGHTWING. HE DOESN'T ALWAYS RESPOND.

YEAH; I KNOW.

THANKS ANYWAY. YOU DID YOUR BEST.

HE'S BEEN, *UMM*, *MOODY* OF LATE. YOU KNOW WHAT'S... *BOTHERING* HIM?

NOTHING I CAN TALK ABOUT.

I SUSPECT THINGS HAVE *CHANGED* FOR HIM LATELY. I WON'T ATTEMPT TO FORCE YOU TO ANSWER.

BUT IF HE EVER NEEDS HELP...

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO ON, COMMISSIONER. I UNDERSTAND.

I'M SURE YOU DO. JUST AS I'M SURE YOU REALIZE HE'S MADE THIS BATTLE WITH *TWO-FACE* SOME SORT OF *PERSONAL CHALLENGE*.

AS IF HE HAS TO *PROVE* SOMETHING.

YOU WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO KNOW *WHAT?*

UNFORTUNATELY, SIR--

--I'M ALL TOO AFRAID I--I...

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NIGHTWING? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

YEAH... YEAH, I'M FINE.

I'M JUST GETTING THIS FEELING...

THANK AZAR!

RAVEN? BUT HOW?

I TOOK LEAVE OF THE TITANS...

WE ARE ALL *AWARE* OF THAT, BUT JERICHO *INSISTED*.

THIS *DATA DISC* MUST BE RUN ON YOUR *MICRO-COMPUTER*.

HE BELIEVES IT HAS SOMETHING TO DO WITH BATMAN!

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IT'S BATMAN'S *DESIGN*, AND ONLY HE AND I KNOW HOW TO READ IT.

HOW DID *JERICHO* KNOW WHAT IT WAS?

BY ACCIDENT. HE LEARNED OF IT *SUBCONSCIOUSLY* WHEN HE ONCE *ENTERED* YOUR BODY.

BUT HE SAID NOTHING LEST YOU FELT YOUR *PRIVACY* INVADED.

WHEN HE *FOUND* IT IN THE TOWER, HE KNEW IT WAS MEANT FOR YOU.

TELL HIM NOT TO *WORRY* ABOUT IT.

HE MAY HAVE HELPED *SOLVE* THIS CASE.

NIGHTWING, THE TITANS STILL WISH TO *ASSIST* YOU.

NOT THIS TIME, RAVEN.

THIS IS BETWEEN BATMAN AND ME.

AND I BELIEVED *MY* PROBLEMS WERE BETWEEN TRIGON AND ME. BUT YOU SHOWED ME OTHERWISE.

HOWEVER, WE WILL *HONOR* YOUR WISHES IF THAT IS WHAT YOU TRULY DESIRE.

IT'S OBVIOUS THEY CARE FOR YOU.

AS I DO THEM, COMMISSIONER.

BUT BATMAN'S NOT COMING. YOU MIGHT AS WELL SHUT DOWN THE *BAT SIGNAL*.

YOU HEARD HIM. LET'S SAVE THE TAXPAYERS AN EVEN *HIGHER* ELECTRICITY BILL.

NOW, WHY DON'T WE SEE WHAT BATMAN--?

DAMN!

WHY DO THEY KEEP *DOING* THAT?

BRUCE WAYNE'S RESIDENCE, ALFRED SPEAKING

AHH, MASTER DICK. YOU HAVE SEVERAL *PHONE MESSAGES* FROM YOUR, UHH--FRIENDS IN NEW YORK.

OH--?

NO, MASTER BRUCE HAS NOT CALLED IN. NOR DO I EXPECT HIM TO.

THESE DAYS COMMUNICATION IS *NOT* HIS *PRIORITY.*

GREAT. SO WHY DO *YOU* THINK BATMAN LEFT ME A *DATA DISC?*

I'M *STUMPED.*

PERHAPS AS A *MESSAGE* FOR YOU...

...OR HIS *CIRCUITOUS* WAY OF PIQUING YOUR INTEREST AND ASKING FOR ASSISTANCE.

YEAH. HE'D NEVER ASK FOR HELP DIRECTLY.

THANKS, ALFRED.

ALFRED, DID DICK AND BRUCE ALWAYS ACT LIKE THAT?

I MEAN, I NEVER EXPECTED BATMAN AND ROBIN TO FIGHT LIKE THEY WERE IN *COMPETITION.*

YOU ASK TOO MANY *PERSONAL* QUESTIONS.

BUT I *CARE* ABOUT THEM, ALFRED. I *REALLY* DO.

I'M CERTAIN YOU DO. AND NO, THEY WERE FAR MORE LIKE FATHER AND SON THAN *RIVALS.*

I'VE LONG FELT WHEN MASTER DICK MOVED TO NEW YORK, MASTER BRUCE TOOK ON JASON TODD NOT ONLY TO REPLACE HIS *PARTNER--*

--BUT HIS SURROGATE *SON* AS WELL.

IT'S *ARMCHAIR* PSYCHOLOGY AT BEST, LAD, BUT AS MUCH AS HE WOULD PROBABLY *DENY* IT--

--I BELIEVE MASTER BRUCE IS ALMOST AS OBSESSIVE ABOUT *FAMILY* AS HE IS ABOUT PREVENTING CRIME.

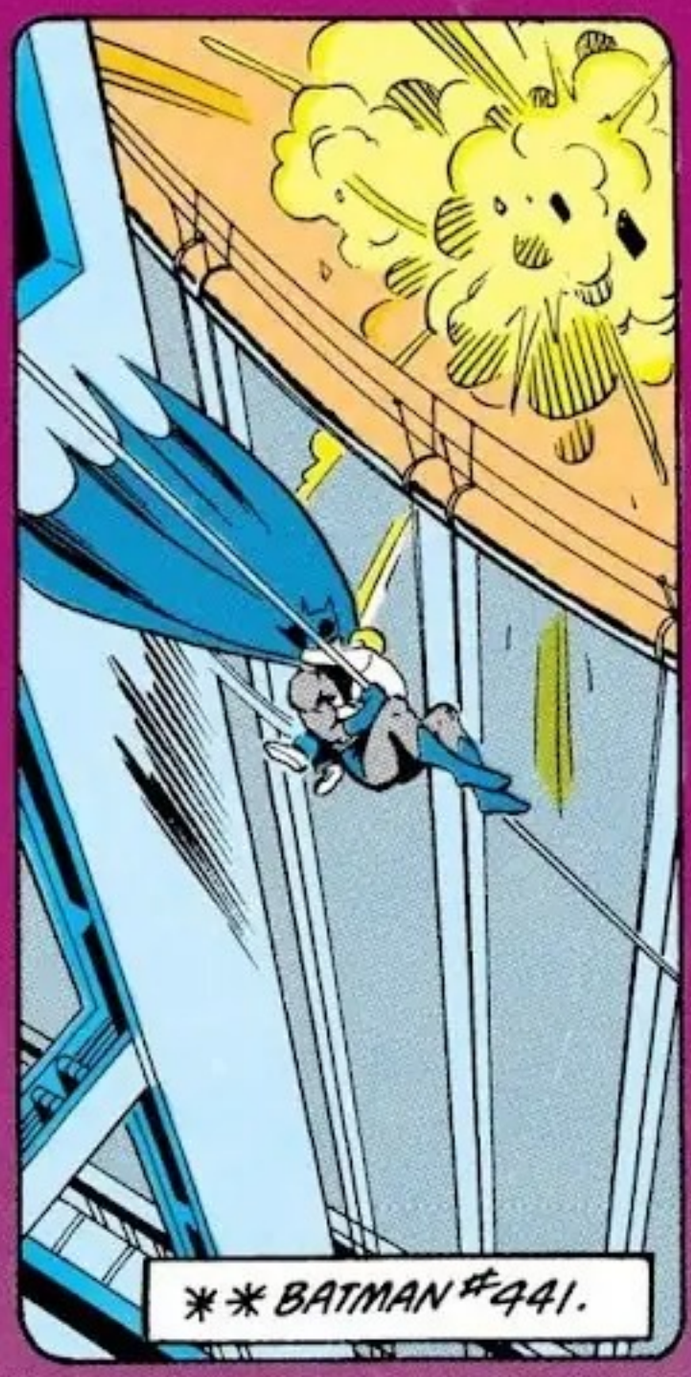
TWO PETTY CRIMINALS ARE SENT TO THE *ZWEI BROTHERS* WAREHOUSE.*

ZWEI IS GERMAN FOR *TWO*. THE WAREHOUSE IS AT 22 SECOND STREET. THEY ROBBED IT AT *TWO* O'CLOCK.

THEN *TWIN BROTHERS* ARE KIDNAPPED AND TIED TO A BRIDGE OVER THE *TWIN RIVERS*.**

TWO-FACE'S INVOLVEMENT COULDN'T BE MORE CLEAR IF HE SPELLED IT OUT IN *NEON*.

*BATMAN #440.



**BATMAN #441.

AND IT'S EQUALLY OBVIOUS HE'S *SHOUTING* OUT HIS INTENTIONS.

TWO-FACE WANTS TO LURE BATMAN TO HIM.

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THE *DISC* BATMAN LEFT LISTS ALL THE *CLUES* HE FOUND, THOUGH *NOT* THE SOLUTIONS.

BUT THEY WERE EASY ENOUGH TO FIGURE OUT.

BATMAN *HAD* TO KNOW I WOULD.

I WENT THROUGH THE *SAME* PROCESS HE UNDOUBTEDLY DID.

YOU *IGNORE* THE MYSTERY AND SIMPLY TAKE THE CLUES AND PIECE THEM TOGETHER.

IF YOU *KNOW* SOMETHING IS SOLVABLE, YOU CAN *SOLVE* IT.

THE LAST CLUE: *GRID MAP.* OF COURSE-- YOU SET ALL THE COORDINATES OF TWO-FACE'S CRIMES ON A *GRID MAP* OF GOTHAM.

"THE TWINS' HOME IS IN DIRECT LINE TO THE BRIDGE.

"THE WAREHOUSE FORMS A V SHAPE GRID WITH BOTH THE TWINS' HOME AND THE BRIDGE.

"TOGETHER THEY FORM THE ROMAN NUMERAL FOR THE NUMBER FOUR.

"THERE! FOURTH AVENUE CROSSES FOURTH STREET-- RIGHT THROUGH APOLLO SQUARE.

"AND THE ROMAN GOD APOLLO WAS A TWIN.

"MAN, I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S WORSE-- BATMAN EXPECTING ME TO FIGURE OUT TWO-FACE'S INSANELY CONCEIVED CLUES...

"...OR HARVEY'S OBSESSION IN COMING UP WITH THEM IN THE FIRST PLACE."

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I WAS *WONDERING* WHEN YOU'D SHOW.

NO HELLOS, HOW-ARE-YOUS?

NOT EVEN IMPRESSED THAT I PUT IT ALL TOGETHER?

I *EXPECTED* YOU WOULD, THOUGH NOT THIS QUICKLY.

I WAS TAUGHT BY THE *BEST.*

SO WHAT'S UP?

NO. I *MEANT* WHY DID YOU *CONTACT* ME?

I NEE--

I COULD USE YOUR *HELP.*

I'M HERE.

ANYTIME.

I THINK TWO-FACE MAY BE *WAITING* FOR US.

WE GO IN TOGETHER, RIGHT?

NO. WE CAN'T PERMIT HIM AN *ESCAPE* ROUTE.

YOU TAKE THE *REAR* ENTRANCE. I'LL TAKE THE *FRONT*.

WHY NOT LET ME TAKE THE DIRECT ROUTE AND THROW HIM FOR A *LOOP*? HE KNOWS *YOU'RE* COMING.

WHICH IS WHY YOU ACT AS *BACK-UP*. HE WON'T EXPECT IT COVERED.

YOU'RE *NOT* WITH THE TITANS NOW.

IF YOU WANT TO BE WITH ME, YOU FOLLOW MY ORDERS.

NOW DO AS I SAY.

BATMAN! *BATMAN!*

DAMN!

HE FEELS BEST WITH THE WIND RUSHING THROUGH HIS CAPE AND THE COLD PRESSING AGAINST HIS FACE.

THIS IS HIS ELEMENT. HERE, IN THE NIGHT, IN THE COLD, SWINGING THROUGH THE BLACKNESS, HE IS HOME.

THE GLASS SEPARATES BEFORE HIS BOOTED FEET. TWO-FACE IS HERE, NO DOUBT ABOUT IT. BUT WHERE? WHAT IS HE PLANNING? WHERE ARE THE TRAPS?

HIS MIND RACES WITH POSSIBILITIES. HIS EYES TAKE IN EVERYTHING, MISSING NOTHING.

INHALING A SHARP BREATH OF COLD AIR, HE PROCEEDS.

TIM IS RIGHT-- BATMAN'S ACTING LIKE A BULL IN A CHINA SHOP.

BUT HE'S NOT *INVULNERABLE*. AND HE'S BARELY PAYING ATTENTION TO THE DANGER.

HE TAUGHT ME TO BE *CAREFUL*. TO USE *STEALTH*.

I HAD TO *LEARN* TO BE CAUTIOUS... TO BE EXTRA CAREFUL.

BUT YOU DON'T *BARGE* IN ANYWHERE, NO MATTER WHAT.

TWO ENTRANCES THROUGH THE BACK. THIS WINDOW OR THE OLD *COAL CHUTE*.

BUT I'VE GOTTEN *TOO BIG* FOR THAT.

AND EVEN THE *WINDOW* IS GOING TO BE A *TIGHT* SQUEEZE.

!

NOW WHAT ARE YOU UP TO, HARVEY?

THIS ISN'T YOUR STYLE.

OR IS IT?

TWO DIFFERENT FORMS OF LOGIC?

TWO PERSPECTIVES?

I CAN COME UP WITH TWO-FACE RATIONALE...

...BUT NO REASON OR MOTIVE TO DO THIS.

AND WHERE'S DICK?

WHY ISN'T HE FOLLOWING MY ORDERS?

I CAN'T *PROTECT* HIM UNLESS--EH?

TWO-FACE'S *COIN*?

NO.

IT'S A *DOUBLE*.

IT ONLY HAS THE *SCARRED* SIDE.

WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

RO--NIGHTWING, CHECK IN.

WHERE *ARE* YOU?

ONLY WAY INSIDE WAS THROUGH THE *BASEMENT*.

BUT THERE'S NO STAIR-CASE UP.

NOTHING ELSE HERE, EITHER. WHAT ABOUT YOU?

YOU WOULDN'T BELIEVE IT.

HE'S TURNED THE CONTENTS OF THIS BUILDING UPSIDE DOWN, BUT I DON'T KNOW WHY.

A CLUE, MAYBE?

MY THOUGHTS, BUT TO WHAT?

TWO VIEWS? UP IS DOWN? WHAT IS HE TRYING TO SAY?

WE'RE BOTH DEAD TIRED. WHY DON'T WE JUST CHECK OUT THE PLACE, THEN HEAD BACK HOME AND *THINK* ABOUT IT?

THERE'S NO REASON TO STAY IF TWO-FACE ISN'T HERE.

SKOOM ON

THEN *YOU* GO.

I'LL WAIT HOW-EVER LONG IT TAKES.

OKAY, OKAY. WE'LL DO IT *YOUR* WAY.

I'M *NOT* GOING TO LEAVE YOU.

BUT THAT WON'T STOP ME FROM TAKING PRECAU-TIONS...

SKIK

FEEP FEEP FEEP

I'LL FIND MY WAY UP AND OUT, THEN WE'LL MAKE OUR PLANS.

ALL RIGHT, IF YOU WANT.

JUST LET ME THINK.

TWO-FACE LEFT ENOUGH CLUES.

HE *HAD* TO KNOW THEY WOULD *LEAD* ME HERE.

AND THAT *COIN--?*

ONLY *ADDS* TO THE CONFUSION.

THIS ISN'T HARVEY'S STYLE. YET WE KNOW HE'S BEHIND THIS.

IT'S POSSIBLE HE *HASN'T* ALTERED HIS *M.O.* WE JUST HAVE TO FIGURE OUT WHAT THIS ALL MEANS.

YOU'RE RIGHT... THIS MAKES SENSE. PERFECT SENSE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THE HOUSE IS TURNED OVER. IT'S UPSIDE DOWN, RIGHT?

THAT MAKES THE *BASEMENT* THE *SECOND FLOOR!*

SLAM

BATMAN?

BATMAN!!

ROBI-- *NIGHTWING?*

NIGHTWING?!?

I THOUGHT IT WOULD TAKE BATMAN AWHILE TO FIGURE OUT MY CLUES.

HOW MUCH *BETTER* THAT IT TOOK *TWO* OF YOU.

TWO-FACE?

HEADS.

YOU LOSE.

NIGHTWING!

TWO BIRDS WITH ONE BOMB!

BAM

AHHH

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BRRR

KKKA

MMM

I TOLD YOU I COULD MAKE IT WORK.

YOU SEE? I'VE *DONE* IT.

SET UP A *MYSTERY.*

GET THEM *MORE* INVOLVED WITH *SOLVING* IT THAN WORRYING ABOUT THEIR OWN SAFETY.

THEN, WHEN THEY'RE CON-GRATULATING THEMSELVES ON THEIR DISCOVERY...

...WHEN THEY'RE *MOST INVOLVED* WITH THE SOLUTION--

--BOOM!

BUT IT ISN'T OVER YET, IS IT, HARVEY, BOY?

WE'VE STILL GOT *MILES* TO GO BEFORE WE SLEEP.

WHY DO YOU SAY, "*WE*"? YOU'RE ME. MY *OTHER* SELF.

I'M *TALKING* TO MYSELF AGAIN, AREN'T I?

AREN'T I? WELL, *ANSWER ME!*

WHAT'S *WRONG*, ALFRED?

PLEASE-- TELL ME!

DANGER, I FEAR, LAD.

MASTER RICHARD HAD TURNED ON HIS *HOMING* SIGNAL.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT? NOW WE KNOW WHERE HE IS.

WE DO... BUT ONLY BECAUSE THE COMPUTER KEEPS TRACK OF ALL INCOMING SIGNALS.

AVENUE 4. STREET 4. NORTHWEST CORNER.

LOOK, TIMOTHY-- THE SIGNAL WAS *CUT OFF* WITHOUT AN *END* COMMAND.

THE CUT-OFF WAS *ABRUPT*. THERE MUST HAVE BEEN AN *ACCIDENT*.

WHAT DO WE DO?

WE CAN'T JUST *LEAVE* HIM THERE.

ALFRED, COME ON...

...WE'VE GOT TO DO *SOMETHING!*

CONCLUDED IN BATMAN #442

NEXT MONTH: RETURN OF THE TERMINATOR!